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Transient Bodies and the Whiteness of Memory: The “Nature” of Permanence
in Big Sur, CA, 1862 - 1937

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Submitted Spring 2010

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Introduction

The history of the American West is rife with the images of the rugged individual, Anglo homesteading families braving the hostile wilderness ahead of them, and, at least in California, the mining towns that literally sprang up overnight and disappeared just as quickly. The rugged individual has been influential in the development and creation of a regional identity in the American West that eschews federal intervention into their livelihoods while benefiting from the government's presence in land and resource management. The homesteading families settled all across the West and Midwest as the government opened up land that many people had once regarded as threatening wilderness. The boom towns of the Gold Rush defined the early landscape and culture of American California as the possibility of national profit from its resources quickened its admission as a state into the union.

It is the effect of such an isolated and rugged environment on the development and evolution of life, industry, and commerce along the Big Sur coast from 1862 to 1937 that I am interested in examining. Specifically, I am interested in how people in the region exploited and utilized the area's natural resources, and changed and adapted their relationship to them to gain the most economic benefit. Ultimately, this study asks, how does this region, which was previously dependent on ranching, timber, and mining for its economic livelihood, evolve into one of the most esteemed locations of natural beauty and wilderness in the world? I begin this work in 1862 with the signing of the Homestead Act which opened up the land for settlement and development by Americans. From here, I will examine the rise, fall, and development of industries, people, and their environment along this southern stretch of coast within Monterey County until the opening of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway in 1937.

While the name Big Sur has mostly applied to the northern half of the coast, my geographical boundaries for this study begin in Point Lobos, just south of present day Carmel, down to the southern border of Monterey County.¹ With the expansion of the wagon road, and eventual construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway, the coast to the south of Carmel would lose some of its ruggedness and become a more enjoyable site of pleasure and recreation. However, this era shows that the length of the coast shared similarities in development and industry despite the social differences and regional affiliations that existed throughout the coast.

The environment and landscape has always had a role and a presence in Big Sur's² economic development – whether through its topographically imposed ruggedness, in its resources available for exploitation and development, or in the later marketability of the natural beauty of the region to tourists and adventurers. While it could be said that the region's dependence on nearby natural resources declined in the early twentieth century, this is only evident if we base this assumption on the *extraction* of these resources. The same resources that early settlers depended on for their livelihoods – both for subsistence and for the market – are the resources that tourists came, and continue to come, from around the state, county, and world to see. The hot springs have always been marketable to tourists and locals alike, and the redwoods have always been a resource to exploit – whether for their timber or for the experience of hiking through a riparian ecosystem filled with these giant *Sequoia sempervirens*. The importance in all

1 These are roughly the same boundaries that the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce uses in their free *Big Sur Guide* (Summer 2009-Spring 2010). They write that “Today, Big Sur refers to that 90-mile stretch of rugged and awesomely beautiful coastline between Carmel to the north and San Simeon (Hearst Castle) to the south.”

While my project initially started with an exploration of Big Sur, I soon realized that for much of the era that this study covers, between 1862 and 1937, many publications viewed the entire coast south of Carmel in a similar manner and so I expanded by boundaries to what is described by the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce.

2 While some may consider that I overextend the boundaries of Big Sur while using it to refer to the entire coast of Monterey County south of Carmel, it still provides a quick shorthand for the region. For those locations that do have more specified names, or as they acquire specified names as their history progresses, I will use them as they appear (i.e. Carmel Highlands, Lucia, Los Burros Mining District).

of this is twofold: first, that an economy changing from one dependent on the industrial exploitation of the resources to an economy based in tourism would ultimately treasure the preservation of those same resources. Secondly, that none of this was a *natural progression*: other resource extractive dependent regions of the West experienced the same decline but did not become world-famous tourist destinations.

There are many possibilities that explain this latter point. The Hotel Del Monte, an elite hotel and resort located in the Del Monte Forest on the Monterey Peninsula, established in 1880 created and facilitated an image of the Monterey Peninsula that the urban elite from across the nation would visit and become familiar with. Later, a depot on the Southern Pacific Railroad would open near the resort, thereby facilitating the ease of transit between San Francisco and the Monterey Peninsula. This would enable those from the San Francisco area, who were able to afford the time and money, both to travel to and to form relationships with the Monterey Peninsula in ways that were not possible with other resource dependent counties further north in the state.³ Throughout the history of the American West we see the importance that the placement of transportation routes has had on economic and tourist development. So while Big Sur remained fairly inaccessible to outsiders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, given the limited road development in the northern part of the coast, potential tourists already had an image of, and familiarity with, the region by the time Big Sur began to slowly take on more of a

3 Many counties in Northern California experienced similar declines in their extraction industries but have not yielded the same benefit and popularization of tourism that Big Sur has. While these counties host the famous Redwood Highway, there still remains very little incentive for tourism other than the State Park system and automobile tourism. I would argue that some of this disparity is due to the difference in proximity to major urban centers such as the San Francisco Bay Area whereby Big Sur is closer both to San Francisco, but also the other urban and suburban areas to the south of the city. Additionally, throughout the mid to late twentieth century Big Sur has created an image for itself that includes not just “rugged” recreation, but also more comfortable and luxurious options for those who can afford it, as well as providing proximity and access to a well regarded wine industry.

public image to outsiders through essays appearing in *Overland Monthly* and literary works by Robinson Jeffers about the region. In addition to its proximity to San Francisco, Big Sur's rugged terrain made it at times prohibitively expensive to transport the resources and materials that were being extracted from the region. As a result, many industries that prospered in other parts of the state did not experience the same longevity in Big Sur. While Northern California (north of San Francisco) still has a functioning timber industry, Big Sur's timber industry, along with its gold mining and lime kilns, had very short lifespans because of the expense in transportation and maintenance. Many individuals and families made a subsistence-based livelihood for themselves, but if the region were to prosper as a whole and sustain a population other than the homesteaders, there needed to be a redirection in its economy. And so, with the increasing expansion and development of a coastal highway, Big Sur gradually became more and more accessible to the outside world and so became a more inviting destination – particularly for the automobile tourist.

The transformation of Big Sur from an extractive to a tourist economy in the early twentieth century illuminates broader questions in the histories of rural America and the American West. This framework approaches the history of Big Sur outside of its presence in the national and literary imagination, which has focused on spectacular photographs and vistas, redwood trees, and novels and prose by Jack Kerouac, Henry Miller, and Robinson Jeffers. The research into, and histories of, rural America and the rural American West are often minimal and not thoroughly undertaken. Even then, these histories often come about in regions that have an explicit connection to the broader national image and identity—whether it is a national park, ski resort, or home to world-class wineries. Big Sur again falls within these nationally identifiable settings – while it has no national parks or wineries, it has an identity that exists within images of

natural beauty and wilderness as well as a connection to nationally known figures. Linda Heidenreich in *“This Land was Mexican Once”* argues that “small-town America is central to understanding the U.S. Nation-state,” and so Big Sur can speak to how we understand the relationship between the American West and the nation at large, as well as how tourism development speaks to how the nation understands its possessions.⁴

While an abundance of literature and writings on Big Sur is prevalent throughout the coast in the public library, gift shops, and bookstores, it is also very limited in scope, period, and complexity. Only a handful of books exist dealing with the history of Big Sur, and even then, they focus mainly on the “pioneers” while neglecting a broader look at the region outside of those families. These books include John Woolfenden's *Big Sur: A Battle for the Wilderness* and Rosalind Sharpe Wall's *A Wild Coast and Lonely*, which were locally published in the 1980s and focused on (and sometimes with errors) the history of the “first families” on the coast. These books largely neglect other aspects of life on the coast, including those individuals, mostly men, who worked wage labor in the industries up and down the coast.

Since the 1980s, the historical literature on the American West and California has advanced greatly and has taken up a multitude of questions regarding the dynamics and intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality from the colonial Spanish era to the present. Unfortunately, very little local literature on Big Sur has been produced since the 1980s, and so it has not had the chance to evolve and incorporate new questions and approaches. The limited amount of scholarly work that exists on the region focuses largely on the land from a scientific (i.e. geological or biological) background or explores the more current controversies and debates

⁴ Linda Heidenreich, *“This Land was Mexican Once”: Histories of Resistance from Northern California*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 1.

surrounding the California Coastal Commission and land use planning along the coast. As countless newspaper articles that followed zoning battles during and after the initial highway development in the 1920s and 1930s show, land use continues to be a highly controversial and hotly debated topic within Big Sur and the Monterey Peninsula even today. Despite the existence of a consistent record of development issues along the coast, these records still do not re-examine the life and interpersonal dynamics of the region.

Aside from these few locally published writings on the region, there also several more books on the history of the County and the City of Monterey, many of which include sections or chapters dedicated to, or contain a brief overview of, Big Sur. John Walton's *Storied Land* is one of the most recent publications dealing with the history of Monterey County from the first Spanish colonizers to the present, and in this book he focuses not only on the history of the region, but also the process of creating and institutionalizing that history. In the preface, Walton states that his “purpose is twofold: to recover the experiences of these people from their archival obscurity and to explain how and why their stories were silenced in the more powerful and selective narratives of major institutional actors during successive historical periods.” “That is,” he continues, “what went into the dominant narratives, what was left out, and how the principles and politics of narrative construction changed over time.”⁵ Additionally, Connie Chiang's *Shaping the Shoreline*, published more recently, has an exceptional analysis of the history of the fishing and tourism industries in Monterey – focusing mostly on Cannery Row. In her work, she includes an analysis and discussion of the many tensions and dynamics on the peninsula—including those within and between race, class and gender, and how they play out to impact the

5 John Walton, *Storied Land: Community and Memory in Monterey*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), xv.

development of the differing fishery and tourism based economies. Finally, Martha K. Norkunas, in her book *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California*, deals with the development of the tourism industry within the city of Monterey, and, much like Walton, discusses how and why specific monuments, markers, and historical events make it into the public memory and why others remain forgotten. The work undertaken by these authors points to how the narratives within public history serve to mediate the environment not only for the tourist, but also for the locals in how they are to remember and write their own history. It is many of these ideas and theories put forth by these authors, who have written about tourism and the making of historical memory and how we can re-read the histories that have been given to us, that I hope to integrate into my theoretical approach into how I analyze the histories present in Big Sur in the pre-highway era.

In pursuing this research I examined a range of historical texts that deal with issues of changing land use patterns, tourism, and automobile tourism/road construction within the American West. By framing Big Sur within the context of the American West I will bring some of the issues discussed here – such as race, citizenship, land-use, and development – into a dialogue with broader themes within this era and region, thereby speaking to Heidenreich's notion that rural America can help us understand the U.S. nation-state. Many, if not most, of the primary sources I examined came from historical newspapers and magazines, the United States census, various booster and tourism publications, government archives and reports, and locally published collections and historical works. One of the challenges in this process has been the difficulty in researching such a rural area – within the population schedules of the census there is no marked “Big Sur” region, nor are there any locally published newspapers or publications that

could have given voice to the residents of the region. This has meant that my search into the United States census could be inaccurate in including, or excluding, many individuals and groups such as American Indians, Chinese, Japanese, service workers, and general laborers. Given these limitations, in my analysis of the census I searched for surnames that have come up repeatedly in the history of Big Sur, and then I could include those names surrounding the more prominent families, in addition to those individuals with occupations listed that proliferated in the region at one point or another.

In exploring the archives, I discovered that many of the discourses, narratives, and publications were as much about what life in Big Sur and down the coast was like as it was about how the outside world *perceived* it. There are articles and essays throughout the publications of the *Carmel Pine Cone*, *Overland Monthly*, and various Monterey regional papers that speak to an outsider's experience in the region, whether it's a school teacher's essay on her experience traveling to and from the coast or the small snippets of the social pages detailing who had visited whom (or what) and where and what they did. Some of the older local histories of the 1980s include long excerpts from interviews and personal journals that illuminate the experiences of the settler families while the same authors still had living members of those families to communicate with and had access to personal collections. While it is unfortunate that I do not have more works that give voice to the settlers of the region, there are many others who have not been included in these histories of the region because they have not left a written record of themselves. Much of the historical work being done on the West involves re-reading those documents that seem so infallible – the census, newspapers, and other government documents. At times, outside perceptions of a place can mean as much as an insider's perspective, particularly if

that place has developed an economy centered around tourism. In some ways, this reliance on the pioneer narrative of the region is part of what Hal Rothman describes as a “process of scripting space, both physically and psychically, [that] defines tourist towns and resorts,” since a place's identity would become as much as what tourists wanted the place to be regardless of what the locals wanted or needed.⁶

While scholars have studied the lives and experiences of the “pioneers,” they have given less attention to the dynamics with, and lives of, the mostly male laboring class who did not choose to settle and homestead the region. These workers provided the itinerant and available labor within the industrial economy of the region, including the construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway. Due to their mobile nature, even the population schedules from the census can only provide a glimpse into the racial and class make up of the region in this manner since it occurs only every ten years, and is missing a decade (1890) due to the destruction of the documents in a fire. By looking beyond the standard narrative of the history of the region, and pursuing a critical analysis centered around race, class, gender, and the environment, I hope to push past the “accepted” histories and approach those messy questions that trouble our relationships with one another and between us and the land.

As previously mentioned, Linda Heidenreich, in her history of Napa County, a small rural area in Northern California, makes a case for why “small-town America is central to understanding the U.S. Nation-state,”⁷ and as such, her “book is very much about asking uncomfortable questions about the histories of small-town America, but also about the ways that social systems are established and normalized throughout the nation-state and through the use of

6 Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 12.

7 Heidenreich, 1.

history.”⁸ In addition to the questions of race, class, and gender that Heidenreich focuses on, I aim to include in my work an environmental analysis that seeks to keep all these other lenses of individual and collective identity in communication with each other so that the stories of community and labor are not lost when talking about changes in the landscape that occur as a result of settlement, industry, and tourism. More importantly, I discuss the manner in which the very same environments and landscapes took precedence over the presence, lives, and experiences of the workers in selling and narrating the region.

In her book, *Inescapable Ecologies*, Linda Nash states that “the twin stories of capitalist exploitation and environmental conquest are not wrong. In fact, they are essential to understanding American—especially western American—history.”⁹ Nash's statement speaks to the functioning of the landscape in Big Sur as I have come to understand it – especially when “environmental conquest” can take the form of either mining or tourism. The histories of capitalist exploitation are also crucial in understanding the formation and relationship between race, class, and labor along the coast as well. Hal Rothman's work in *Devil's Bargains* highlights the connection between industrialization, post-industrialization, colonization and their cumulative impacts and influences on the development of tourism-based economies as it has evolved in the American West, and so speaks to many of these same interactions and complexities between people and their places.

This historical case study of Big Sur incorporates many of the trends and developments prevalent in the history of the American West. By bringing together local histories of the region in conversation with broader histories of the American West – including those that speak to

8 Heidenreich, xi.

9 Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2.

tourism, environment, and historical memory – I aim to put this work in the context of projects of regional and national identity formations. The histories of Big Sur, and narratives in the region's interpretative history, have often focused on the settler families while paying less attention to the constant influx of laborers and the racialized labor divisions that existed in Big Sur as they did in many other parts of the state. In the period from 1862 to 1937, Big Sur experienced dramatic changes in its social, economic, and environmental landscape through the beginning of homesteading families, to the rise of small, short-lived industries, and ending with the opening of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway which cemented the presence and role of tourism in developing Big Sur's economy. The focus on the changing and developing economy of the region speaks not only to Big Sur, but also to how economies throughout the West have evolved as well as to how the West has existed in the national imaginary.

Chapter 1

Extracting Meaning: Natural Resources and Early Industry

The late nineteenth century, particularly the 1880s, saw a plethora of booster publications about Monterey County. Publications, including a special issue of *The Monterey Democrat* in 1888, highlighted many aspects of the region, including its industries, mines, opportunities for “health and pleasure,” and provided information on how to claim public lands. Other publications, such as *The Hand Book to Monterey and Vicinity*, made references to the ample opportunities for homesteading along the coast as “there is but one Spanish grant between the Carmello and San Luis Obispo.”¹

The existence of large Spanish and Mexican land grants throughout the state of California was a topic of much discussion among pioneering Anglos who felt that they were being denied full access to the lands of the new territory. Much of the booster literature of the era made a point of discussing the nature of the “Spanish-speaking inhabitants” of the region and how they figured into the local social structure. Sociologist John Walton in his book *Storied Land* discusses how “Spanish California was refashioned as a commodity traded among buyers and sellers in the developing heritage market,” beginning in the mid-twentieth century.² This emphasis on a Spanish California was also one of the region's selling points, regardless of how desirable that narrative might be to the inhabitants of the region. This focus on the region's Spanish past is crucial for discussing Big Sur's history and economy in the late nineteenth century as it still remained largely dependent on a ranching based economy in addition to industries centered around timber and mining that existed in various forms since the Mexican era. This chapter will

1 *The Hand Book to Monterey and Vicinity* (Monterey, 1875), 34.

2 John Walton, *Storied Land: Community and Memory in Monterey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 215-216.

focus on the role of extraction industries in the development of Big Sur's economy and how race, citizenship, and class fit into the narratives of resource extraction industries in the American West.

Along the Big Sur coast, race and labor mediated the relationships of individuals to the nation through the differing relationships they had to the land. Both the census and western-focused publications, such as the *Overland Monthly*, reflect and contribute to the formation of these relationships. The Mexican and Mexican-American³ population of the region, while at times seemingly fully integrated into broader American social life, given the numerous families with Spanish surnames, were often still members of a subordinate class. Their class status also greatly depended on what kind of families individuals married into, as well as a person's skin complexion. The census population schedule of 1880 demonstrates this in that those persons who possessed Spanish surnames and were born in California, as well as both of their parents, almost always had their employment listed as laborer or vaquero – with a spattering of farmers thrown in. Even the designation of farmer did not necessarily indicate a prosperous existence, as many, if not most, of the farmers in the region were merely subsistence farmers and not growing their crops for the market. The 1900 census additionally shows that many of those with Spanish surnames were illiterate and did not speak English⁴, thereby further limiting their position within a now white Anglo-dominated region.

The *Overland Monthly* functions more explicitly than the census as a site that solicits and forms the opinions of outsiders. This plays out regarding the children and families along the Big Sur coast and how they fit into the national fabric – and most importantly, what these opinions

3 The Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who I am referring to in this region are mostly California residents born or descended from those who were born, when California was considered Mexican territory.

4 In this census, many of the non-English speakers are able to read and write, but it is not indicated in which language that is.

mean for defining an American identity. A former schoolteacher on the southern end of the coast wrote in *Overland Monthly* of her students in a “chiefly Spanish-Mexican” community that, “considering their opportunities the Spanish-Mexican children are bright. They are quick at writing, language, and mechanical arithmetic, though slower in reasoning than Americans.”⁵ Additionally, regarding their language, she writes that “most of the children, the few Americans included, speak Spanish with various degrees of fluency, and a very small degree of purity, while the English of the Mexican element is in most cases very lame and ludicrous...a few speak no English at all, and all the children of one family find it impossible to express themselves without the freedom of both languages.”⁶ This distinction between the American and “Spanish-Mexican” children is significant for the region since in one schoolteacher's essay on her year on the coast, she brings about questions of how these children fit into the nation and an American identity on a remote coast into the national dialogue by including it in a nationally published and circulated magazine.

In addition to the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, many Chinese and Japanese men also spent time along the coast. For the Chinese, their residence on the coast aligns more with the experience of Chinese throughout the American West and less so with the exceptional nature of the family-based communities found within the nearby Chinese fishing villages on the Monterey Peninsula roughly thirty miles outside of Big Sur.⁷ While the Chinese and Japanese were few in number along the coast, they participated in many of the industries in the region as laborers or independent fishermen. In the 1880 and 1900 census population schedules, the few Chinese men in the region are listed as cooks or laborers. Japanese men did not immigrate to the region until

5 Mary L. White, “Over the Santa Lucia,” *Overland Monthly*, Nov. 1892.

6 Ibid.

7 See Sandy Lydon's *Chinese Gold* for a more detailed history of the Chinese and Chinese-American communities on the Monterey Peninsula at the end of the 19th century.

shortly before 1900, and only in significant numbers afterwards. The 1910 census shows just over a dozen Japanese men listed as laborers at a lime kiln, and a handful more as woodchoppers presumably on the same site – nowhere before has any work mentioned the presence of such a large number of Japanese along the coast at any point, due to both the focus on the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the region and the concentration of the Japanese as fishermen and agricultural laborers directly in and surrounding the Monterey Bay. As they were living in an Anglo-centric society, these Chinese and Japanese men experienced many of the same socioeconomic difficulties and roadblocks that the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the region experienced through the culturally imposed limitations on their position as workers.

Life and labor along the Big Sur coast was often intimately tied to a person's raced, classed, or gendered identity. A person or group's social position largely determined and influenced how they would live and work along the coast. Most of the families living along the coast were white or mixed; however in mixed families the father was most often white. In contrast, men of color were almost exclusively single wage laborers, although there were single white wage laborers as well. Ultimately, this intimacy between labor and social position is nothing new in history, but in a region that is so often revered for its pioneering and settler class, it is often ignored or not studied with the attention that it deserves. A racialized division of labor existed in many of Big Sur's industries at various points that privileged the labor of Anglo men in positions of managers, overseers, and other like positions and placed men of color and men with Spanish surnames in positions of vaqueros and general labor. While this division was not always clear cut, it still highlights the ways in which Anglo men were more likely to be given positions of leadership that often included the supervision of men of color. This dynamic also excludes

industries like fishing, especially for abalone, which was limited along the coast due to the dangerous nature of the coastline as these fishermen were often individuals, groups, or families that did not employ a supervisory structure. However, even if there was no managing position, the realm of commercial abalone fishing in and of itself was racialized as it was considered a job taken only by Japanese and Japanese-Americans.

In this chapter, I will explore the different extractive resource industries of the region, beginning with those “above ground” including ranching and timber followed by the “below ground” industries that included the mining of lime, gold, and coal. Within these industries, I will examine the ways in which race, class, gender, and labor interact with one another in ways that contribute to the development of the region's economy. Additionally, I will look at the ways in which the economic development has centered the “environment” of the region as a source of capital while relegating the people and the labor to the margins.

Above Ground

No other subject is as revered or studied in Big Sur as the era where the homesteads and ranches dominated. Many of the early histories of the region, written mostly in the 1970s and 1980s, are more histories of the various homesteading families in addition to the mining activities in the Los Burros Mining District. This speaks to how many people view the narrative of the American West, and California in particular, as one primarily of the Anglo pioneers and the independent and rugged individualism of the mining class sparked by the initial Gold Rush in 1849. However, this preoccupation with the homesteaders also speaks to another aspect of the narrative of California history that focuses on the transition of California from a Mexican to an American state and its effect on the white settlers. In the beginning of *Racial Fault Lines*, Tomás

Almaguer discusses the incoming tide of Anglo immigrants to the state of California and what it meant for the development of a powerful Anglo-American class in California, even before the Mexican-American War, and how the Anglo elites were then able to mold California's post-1848 political development.⁸ Through the existence and creation of land grants from the Mexican government, which impeded the Anglo acquisition of land capital⁹, Almaguer states that “The Mexican rancho class became the first formidable barrier to the realization of Anglo class aspiration in the state.” This process played out in numerous ways in Monterey County throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Newspaper and magazine articles throughout the late nineteenth century lament the negative impact that the large Spanish and Mexican land grants had on the new white settlers and their inability to access all the land that they desired because it was already held. *The Californian* in an article titled “A New California” states that “the Spanish territorial grants, which were recognized as valid under the treaty of cession from Mexico, covered the best portions of the state” and further makes note of the expansive litigation process many of the grant owners and various levels of government went through in “verifying” the boundaries and owners of each claim.¹¹ Additionally, *The Handbook of Monterey and Vicinity*, an informational book on Monterey County, refers to the unoccupied lands of the region and notes that “to add to the many other advantages that this beautiful section of country possesses over other parts of the State, is the fact that there is but one Spanish grant between the Carmelo and San Luis Obispo, a

8 As will be discussed briefly later, the Cooper family is a prime example of this phenomenon.

9 For this reason, many Anglo (men) married into prominent Mexican and Californio families in order to acquire land holdings from the Mexican government.

10 Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 41.

11 Alexander del Mar, “A new California,” *The Californian*, March 1881.

distance of from eighty to one hundred miles.”¹² Finally, in a special issue of *The Monterey Democrat* an article appears titled “Large Land Grants. Which Have Been Our Great Curse. Being Subdivided. Our Drawback.”¹³ where the writer describes the manner in which the existence of the grants has impeded development and settlement in the region. While only two land grants existed along the coastal range, the constant attention paid to the existence of the grants in newspapers and publications signifies the importance of these grants in the public's image of California, and a California that would benefit from Anglo settlement and development.

The ranches and homesteads occupying the coast should not be overlooked as a minor presence on the coast, however, given the lack of land grants in the region. Rather, these establishments occupied large swaths of land, often stretching hundreds of acres¹⁴ and would be formative and central to the region's developing economy. Many of these ranches provided wage-labor employment for individuals along the coast in jobs such as vaquero, stock raiser, cheese maker, butter maker, and the generic “laborer.” Most of these individuals were single men and almost all listed as white, with none to a small handful marked as Indian depending on the census year, while many of the vaqueros and laborers possessed Spanish surnames.¹⁵ Almaguer's discussion of racial and class formation during California's early years of statehood notes how:

Indians became a marginal part of the new society while Mexicans were subordinated at the lowest levels of the working class, where they did not pose a serious problem for European Americans. Moreover, both groups remained tied to the precapitalist ranching or hunting and gathering economies of the Mexican

12 *The Handbook to Monterey and Vicinity*, 42.

13 “Large Land Grants,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, (Salinas, CA), June 30, 1888.

14 Many of the initial ranches and homesteads were established as a result of the 1862 Homesteading Act which allowed the registration of claims of 160 acres (1862), 320 acres (1909 – Enlarged Homestead Act), and 640 acres (1916 – Stock-Raising Homestead Act)

15 In the early U.S. censuses, surnames are the only site in which it is possible to identify Mexican-descended individuals since both Anglos and Mexican-descended peoples were listed as “white.” While this is far from accurate, and has the potential to leave out many individuals it is still able to provide a rough approximation.

period for decades after statehood and did not contend with European-American men who were rapidly being integrated into the capitalist labor market.¹⁶

Almaguer's statement aptly reflects the dynamics and economy of the region that saw few Indians present (due largely to their migration and decimation during the Mission years) and Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Californios in economically subordinate positions when they did not come from larger influential political and ranching families. By placing Mexicans in the lower economic positions of laborer and vaquero, the Anglo homesteaders and ranchers ensured that they would not compete in the same manner as other independent, single white men in the region who could hold more skilled and specialized positions.

Despite this racialized division, many of the land-holding ranchers and homesteaders came from mixed-race families. Juan Bautista Rogers (J.B.R.) Cooper, an Anglo immigrant to California during the Mexican era and second holder of the deed to the Rancho El Sur, married Maria Geronima Encarnación Vallejo, sister of General Mariano Vallejo, a prominent general in the Mexican army and politician in California. The Cooper family became one of the most well-known and politically connected families in the region as they had connections to both the Mexican and American governments. Over the years the Rancho El Sur was to be divided among the descendents of the Coopers, with part of it coming into the possession of the Moleras by way of their daughter Guadalupe Francesca Amelia Cooper's marriage to Eusebius J. Molera, and now is known as Andrew Molera State Park.

Another example acts as an interesting case study of both the formation and creation of whiteness in California in the late nineteenth century and the many and changing ways in which the federal government constantly evolved its definition of whiteness. On the Post Ranch,

¹⁶ Almaguer, 153.

homesteader William Brainard (W.B.) Post married Anselma Onesime, an Indian raised and educated at the Mission in Carmel. W.B. Post acted as foreman at the Soberanes¹⁷ ranch in addition to working his homestead claim. In the 1880 census, Anselma is marked as Indian (“I”), and their children are marked as half-Indian (“1/2 I”). But in the 1900 census, all the children and Anselma are listed as white. María Raquéel Casas' discussion of Lisbeth Haas, the historian, in *Married to a Daughter of the Land* notes that Haas “points out that the bipolarity of assimilation and accommodation models allows for only two options: one either remains in one's primary ethnic identity or 'becomes' American,” which we see play out in the change of racial designation of the census of the Post family.¹⁸ This change in racial designation would probably not have occurred without their Anglo father and ability to speak English (even if the mother remained illiterate).

The more modest and family oriented homesteads were, for the most part, subsistence productions with the occasional cattle, sheep, or goat grazing efforts. These places also affected the region's landscape in significant ways that are still present today. In *The Natural History of Big Sur*, Paul Henson and Donald Usner write of the region that “unfortunately, many areas that were once covered with mature valley oaks—low-lying valleys with rich soil—were cleared of the trees and given over to agriculture.”¹⁹ Additionally, the “cattle and sheep grazing over the last two centuries may have also reduced the number of young oaks.”²⁰ While in many ways grazing and ranching may seem to be of minor significance as it did not involve the felling of trees or “productive development” of the landscape into agriculture, the impact that the cattle economy

17 Another local settler family

18 María Raquéel Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-Mexican Women and Interethnic Marriage in California, 1820-1880* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 149.

19 Paul Henson and Donald J. Usner, *The Natural History of Big Sur* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 189.

20 Henson and Usner, 194.

had on the region is visible even today.

Aside from the roles played by the ranches and homesteads along the coast, and the importance of cattle to the region's economy (there are still cattle grazing near the Point Sur Lighthouse today), the proliferation of tan oak and redwood trees helped to give the region another source of income and employment. The bark from tan oak trees provided the region with a resource for the tanning of hides that was such an integral part of the region's early economy. Unlike Big Sur and other regions in Monterey County, Santa Cruz had a much more timber-centric economy largely due to the numerous redwood trees in the region and the greater accessibility in removing the resource. The Notley brothers, who eventually made a name for themselves along the coast, were originally involved with timber in Santa Cruz, and upon hearing about available land down the coast, they decided to investigate the prospects. They eventually set up an operation falling, milling, hauling, and shipping pine, oak, and redwood out of the Palo Colorado Canyon area near what is now known as Notley's Landing.

In a 1906 article from the *Monterey New Era* titled “Going Deeper after Tan Bark” the author references the G. C. Notley Company and that “the supply of tan oak on the coast is being cleaned out pretty rapidly, and it is reported that the company is about to establish a landing at Pfeiffer's, going into the more inaccessible sections of the coast for their supply of bark.”²¹ The mindset of the region and era assumed that the lumber along the coast was a fairly inexhaustible resource. However, that the Notleys had to move their operations to maintain production indicates that this was not the case. The Notley brothers, and the tanbark industry in general, have left their impact on the coast with place names such as “Notley's Landing” and the Tanbark Trail near Partington Cove where it, as Henson and Usner write, “was one shipping point for

²¹ “Going Deeper after Tan Bark,” *Monterey New Era*, (Monterey, CA), Jan. 3, 1906.

tanbark bound for the tanneries, and stands of multitrunked and even-aged trees grow along the Tanbark Trail in Partington Canyon.”²² The lumber industry was also highly racialized, and largely composed of white Anglos. At times Japanese men were able to insert themselves into the industry working with the labor intensive cuts of wood, sometimes referred to as “split stuffs.” In the 1900 census, Chinese men are often listed as cooks near groups of white men employed as “bark peelers,” “woodsmen,” or “lumberers.” This indicates that the timber industry, largely reserved for white Anglo men, remained inaccessible for the Chinese immigrants to the region.

While the tanbark industry was central to the region's economy, in many ways, the extraction and use of timber along the coast existed as a more personal endeavor or as a side-note to capitalist interests along the coast. Many of the families along the coast felled pines and redwoods for the construction of their homes and other buildings on their property as well as for their own personal source of fuel. Even companies reliant on the extraction of the resources of the region often used timber for their own operations. For instance, in John Woolfenden's book *Big Sur: A Battle for the Wilderness*, he describes the existence and initial purpose of the mill constructed by the Ventana Power Co. that was later put back into operation by Florence Pfeiffer in the early 1900s. Woolfenden writes that:

The mill had been started so that cut timbers could be taken up by pack train to build bunkhouse, cookhouse, and private residences. The animals returned with tanbark, which was shipped out at the mouth of the Big Sur River along with pickets and split redwood. Similar operations were carried on at Mill and Limekiln Creeks, and Notley's landing. The idea of generating power fell by the wayside when the tanbark and the easily reached timber were finally depleted and the company moved to Santa Cruz.²³

Woolfenden's description highlights the varied uses of timber up and down the coast. First,

²² Henson and Usner, 202.

²³ John Woolfenden, *Big Sur: A Battle for the Wilderness, 1869-1985* (Pacific Grove, CA: The Boxwood Press, 1985), 11.

Florence Pfeiffer's revival of the mill served to build further accommodations at her growing resort (which will be discussed in the next chapter). Secondly, the reference to other creeks and landings along the coast speak to the proliferation of these kinds of endeavors, especially when at Mill (later also known as Bixby) and Limekiln Creeks utilized the wood cut in their lime production as well as in the Notley's specialty in tanoak. Finally, the phrase “easily reached timber” is crucial in understanding the development of the extractive resource economy along the Big Sur coast as the financial troubles of a company or operation did not occur when they had exhausted the local supply, but when they had exhausted the supply that which was easily reached and economically viable to extract and transport.

While many companies and others with economic interests in the region utilized the local timber supply for their own for-profit purposes – whether selling the timber outright or using it as fuel – many of the residents of the coast still considered their personal use of the timber a right. The large expanses of land each family could claim under their name, combined with the proliferation of timber throughout the coast, enforced their understandings of and beliefs in their ability to access resources in the public domain. Many of the permanent residents of the coast belonged to families – most of which contained a white Anglo male head of household – who most often settled on homestead claims. Even though the census does not note which individuals lived on homesteads, and thus would have a greater stake in preserving their entitlement to the local resources for personal, subsistence purposes, it is possible to interpret homesteaders as “farmers” or “ranchers” as opposed to “laborer” and “vaquero.”

This mindset regarding the use of resources in the public domain appears in a WPA history of California State Parks where the author writes that “Some settlers were so wise as to

locate their land so it would contain a third or more of the area forested with redwood timber. This would furnish them their own needed lumber supplies. It brought them a source of income till such a time as their fruit orchards, farms, or vineyards began to produce and bring in returns.”²⁴ Logging and homesteading throughout the West initiated federal legislation regarding the use of timber and public lands. *The Monterey Democrat* relayed information from the Timber and Stone Act of 1878 that allowed “any person qualified to take a homestead may also purchase 160 acres of land, valued chiefly for its timber, and unfit for cultivation, for \$2.50 an acre.”²⁵ Richard White discusses the development of this legislation coming from an assumption “that trees were an impediment to progress, an obstacle to be removed. The federal laws thus bore little relation to the realities of western Washington, where the land itself had little agricultural potential, but the forests were the areas of real wealth.”²⁶ While Big Sur is a long ways from western Washington, in many ways it is in the same situation of being relatively unfit for cultivation and agricultural enterprise. It still belonged to a part of the infant logging industry, which “developed under a set of laws that presumed the highest use of any land was for farming,” and the region's publications, including *The Monterey Democrat*, willingly advertised and publicized the existence of lands for settlement and extraction.²⁷

Decades after the passage of The Stone and Timber Act, the Monterey National Forest was established in 1906 as the precursor to today's Ventana Wilderness Area and Los Padres National Forest. This era highlighted the rise of conservation, which became a concern for much

24 Don Morton, “Pfeiffer's Redwood State Park, State Park No. 49,” in Vernone Aubrey Nesham, ed., *History of California State Parks*, (Berkeley: State of California, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, 1937), 10. Written as part of Works Progress Administration Official Project #465-03-3-133

25 “Timber Land,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, June 30, 1888.

26 Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 79.

27 White, 77.

of the East and West coast middle-class and elites in the wake of such milestones as the formation of the Sierra Club in 1892 in San Francisco, and the establishment of some of the first National Parks – Yellowstone National Park in 1872, Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks in 1890, and Mount Rainier National Park in 1899. While very little exists to suggest that the residents of the Big Sur coastal region were charged with engaging in activities that violated the regulations and protections surrounding national forest lands, a relationship began to emerge between the people living on the coast and the pleasure seekers venturing into it that ultimately gave way to the creation of a number of state parks along the coast, resulting in many the local residents deeding much of their land back into the public domain over the decades. Karl Jacoby in *Crimes Against Nature* writes that “the arrival of conservation thus marks a crucial divide in the history of rural America,” in that conservation would change the way in which rural inhabitants were allowed to interact with the land.²⁸

One of the favored objects of northern California conservation efforts was the redwood tree. Even today, Henson and Usner write that “if there is one tree that most non-Californians identify with this state, it is certainly the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*),” emphasizing the importance that the redwood has played in the formation of California's identity.²⁹ Around the turn of the twentieth century, the Save-the-Redwoods League, among other conservation groups, marked the redwood as a species that should be preserved since, as some would argue, “like Anglo-Saxon America...the redwood was imperiled by 'race suicide' from rampant logging, urban encroachment, and human ignorance.”³⁰ This echoes other narratives of nation-building as

28 Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 197.

29 Henson and Usner, 130.

30 Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 124.

anthropologist Jake Kosek writes “that metaphors of trees have been important means through which the relationship of citizens to nation is formed.”³¹ In this instance then, the American project of nation-building includes the privileging of white, Anglo bodies along with the “Americanization” (i.e. assimilation) of non-Anglo whites to create a uniformly recognizable national image. In the 1920s, a particularly strong and eventful decade in the history of eugenics in the United States, residents of Carmel viewed the existence of the redwood as something to be preserved, considering that in that decade the local residents of Carmel put on a theater production speaking to the greatness of the redwood. A poem in the local *Carmel Pine Cone* appeared titled “On the Death of a Redwood”:

Farewell! Thou grave, sonorous; woodland seer,
Best loved, most ancient monarch of them all;
We mourn with thy hill brethren for thy fall.
Farewell! red guardian of the last frontier.

An unregenerate order calls thee dumb,
Insensible, and soulless—but they know
Not where thy grateful emanations go.
From what degree thy spirit may have come.

O great mysterious entity, that drew
Thine independence from the sun and air
And still persisted, vigorous and fair.
Though at thy base the fires had eaten through--

Thy days have all been full—thy ringed years
In their harmonious course around thy heart,
With what we rarely sense—have made thee part
So—thou art one more grace that disappears.

No more shalt thou enjoy thy fruitful prime--
The pale blind plague, unchecked, unhumbled moves
For murderous profit through thy holy groves;
Farewell! illustrious favorite of time.

CHAS. COOP.³²

31 Jake Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in New Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 122.

32 Chas. Coop., “On the Death of a Redwood,” *Carmel Pine Cone* (Carmel, CA), Aug. 24, 1922.

This poem speaks to the local attitude toward the use of land and settlement, and how it differed between those in Carmel and in Big Sur. By referring to the redwood as the “red guardian of the last frontier,” the author is invoking a Euro-centric frontier identity that speaks to a white, English literate, audience. Further, the lines “The pale blind plague, unchecked, unhumbled moves/For murderous profit through thy holy groves” indicate the belief that the redwood should not be felled for commercial monied interests. However, the poem does not necessarily give any indication on what the author thinks about the use of the tree for personal purposes. This distinction between capital and personal interests is important, as when Jacoby discusses “working-class wilderness” he emphasizes the distinction that locals made between personal and for-profit use of the land. Over the years, “conservation” would become a buzz-word in the region as the coast became more developed and this philosophy towards development would dictate and influence how people – locals and tourists alike – were to view their relationship with this rugged coastal landscape to the south of Carmel. This poem then hints at the beginning of the importance of conservation and preservation within future debates over the development of the coast.

Below Ground

Unlike many of the so-called “above ground” resources, the locals very rarely were able to benefit from, or engage in, many of the operations along the coast that focused on resources such as lime, gold, and coal. The monetary investment required for the necessary equipment to even make such endeavors profitable was out of reach for many of the local residents. However, these operations employed many individuals up and down the coast, including those already living there as well as attracting those from outside. The limekiln industry is perhaps the most

well known and prominent along the coast. While there were several limekilns along the coast, the brief and sporadic gold rushes that occurred in the Los Burros Mining District created some of the greatest publicity for the region. Lastly, one of the shortest lived endeavors along the coast is at the Malpaso coal seam just a few miles south of Point Lobos. All of these industries had significant impacts on the perceptions of the region and influenced the way that locals and visitors alike would retell this part of the region's history in the future.³³ These industries also engaged in a racialized division of labor, much like their counterparts in the “above ground” industries. Chinese and Japanese appeared as laborers in some of these industries, and were often assigned to the more dangerous jobs. Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and individuals with Spanish surnames were also positioned on the lower rungs of employment through the label of “laborer.”

The investment required of limekiln operations was prohibitive to almost any of the locals in the region. Many of the laborers working in the limekilns, and in the periphery of the limekiln industry, were single men not tied to homesteads or families along the coast who roomed in boarding houses or with the local families. The 1910 census is the first time that an individual's industry is listed, so before this time only an educated guess can be made regarding in what industry a person works – a woodsman could very well work for the limekilns, but he could also work for the timber industry; a laborer could occupy positions in any number of industries from farms to dairy ranches to limekilns to timber.

In many ways, the interdependence of the different industries and resources is an important part of the region's resource extraction-based economy and its development. In the

³³ Despite the distinction that I have made between “above” and “below ground,” much overlap exists between almost all the industries as they often relied on each other and brought together a diverse and constantly evolving workforce.

regional papers of this period, descriptions of limekiln operations can hardly be discussed without mentioning their own mill operations or the availability of wood nearby. A special issue of *The Monterey Democrat* has a section titled “Lime and Lumber,” and an 1874 article from the *Monterey Weekly Herald* is titled “Sawmill and Lime Kiln” and goes on to say that:

We are credibly informed that parties are constructing a saw mill and lime kiln at a point on the coast sixteen miles south of this place. It is their intention to build a shute [sic] for the loading of their lumber and lime. They report that they have secured four hundred acres of fine redwood timber. This is but the commencement of many such enterprises that will spring up on the coast south of Monterey, the country thereabouts offering many inducements to those who have pluck enough to risk their time and money.³⁴

The lime operations at Bixby Landing (the abandoned operations there would become the setting for Robinson Jeffers' *Thurso's Landing*) existed largely due to the availability of timber in the area to fuel the kilns. The 1888 report from the California Mines Bureau, in its description of the Rockland Lime and Lumber Company further down the coast, states that “the works of this company consist of four patent perpetual kilns, with a capacity of one hundred and ten barrels each per day. These kilns consume seven cords of wood to every one hundred barrels of lime burned,” and so further speaks to the relationship between the lime and lumber industries.³⁵

Part of the interdependency between industries and resources in the region's development stems from the important positions these industries held as employers in the region. The sites of limekilns hosted decently sized settlements for the employees of their companies. An 1888 issue of *The Monterey Democrat* references the operations at the Rockland Lime and Lumber Company (near present day Limekiln State Park) and notes that the company will be at full operations “give employment to 100 men as coopers, hoop, stave, and wood cutters, carpenters,

34 “Sawmill and Lime Kiln,” *Monterey Weekly Herald* (Monterey, CA), Dec. 5, 1874.

35 William Ireland, Jr., California Mines Bureau, “Monterey County,” in *Report of the State Mineralogist*, no. 8 (1888), 411.

firemen, teamsters, quarrymen, etc.” and that on site “there is at present ten dwelling houses, stable, cooper shop, blacksmith shop, tool houses, etc., and more are being rapidly built.”³⁶ So while the article points to the diversity of positions required in sustaining just one type of industry along the coast, it also highlights the presence and extent of wage employment along the coast.

The necessity and presence of such a large labor force indicates the large amount of capital that these large mine companies possessed in order to invest in the machinery needed in the industry and to employ a workforce. The capital required thus put the lime industry out of reach for most of the population along the coast, except perhaps as employees of larger companies. Two of the main sites in which the limekilns existed down the coast are Bixby's Landing at Bixby (also known as Mill) Creek, and Rockland Landing near present day Limekiln State Park. The companies affiliated with these operations consist of Monterey Lime Company at the former and Rockland Lime and Lumber company at the latter. An excerpt from the WPA Writers Project in 1937 appears to cite a 1904 newspaper article in *The Monterey New Era* that gives an update on the “Operations of Monterey Lime Co” stating that it “is making extensive improvements in its works and landing there. A new thirty-horse-power engine will be shipped down to today...More machinery for sawing out lumber and making barrels will be shipped in a few days.”³⁷ The author later reassures the reader that “the lime, which the company is shipping in large quantities, is of the highest grade, and difficulty is experienced in supplying the demand for it,” which could very well be due to the difficult nature of accessing the very resources the company is extracting.³⁸

36 “Lime and Lumber,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, June 30, 1888.

37 “Operations of Monterey Lime Co,” *The Monterey New Era*, Oct. 12, 1904.

38 Ibid.

The 1910 census provides information concerning the limekilns at the Rockland Lime and Lumber Company.³⁹ Approximately a page and a half of the population schedule appears to be dedicated to employees at this limekiln operation. It indicates that fifteen Japanese men are general “laborers” at the limekiln, and that another four Japanese men are employed as wood choppers – and while their occupations are not listed as “limekiln,” as these men are at the end of a string of employees affiliated with the lime kilns, a reasonable assumption can be made that they were in fact providing lumber to the company. One Chinese man is listed as the cook,⁴⁰ and close to a dozen Italians are listed at the location, including one family. In addition to the four Japanese men, one Italian man is also employed as a wood chopper, but he is listed as a “laborer” in the occupation of “wood chopper” while the Japanese men are listed as “choppers” in the occupation of “wood.”

While this may appear to be a meaningless distinction or difference, between “laborer” and “chopper,” Sandy Lydon's brief discussion of the Japanese in the region's lumber industry points out that this may not be so. He writes that, “the Monterey Bay Region's redwood lumber industry was almost entirely closed to Asian immigrants” due largely to prejudice as well as an economic depression that halted much of the timber production in the 1890s.⁴¹ As a result, “the Japanese were able to enter the woods and work in a very specialized niche, the manufacture of what is known as 'split stuff.’”⁴² Lydon discusses how the production of “split stuff” was socially

39 The census does not state which company the men were employed to, but the proximity of the men to the Dani family on the census, a south coast family who have had at least one family member in the employment of the Limekiln Company at Rockland Landing, gives a fairly well educated guess that that is the company and region under which these men are employed.

40 “Cook” is the most popular position of employment for Chinese men seen among the population schedules for the approximated Big Sur region.

41 Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, CA: Capitola Book Company, 1985), 52.

42 Lydon, 52.

below that of milling wood, and so this niche provided employment and access to the industry to the Japanese when white workers were content with their position in the industry. However, given that the majority of timber workers at this limekiln were of Japanese descent and they were joined only by one white worker who was not able to speak English either, only Italian⁴³, it is very possible that this distinction between “trade” and “profession” indicated in the census is meaningless considering that Italians were not given the same privileges as other white Americans during this era. This stems from the immigration politics of the early twentieth century that viewed Southern and Eastern European immigrants as inferior to Western Europeans, based largely on political, religious, and social differences. Regardless, it is still important to recognize the social distinctions that existed elsewhere in the region, as it undoubtedly impacted the perceptions and socioeconomic positions of Chinese and Japanese workers along the coast in Big Sur.

In addition to the limekilns down the coast, the other prominent lime production facility was situated at Bixby Landing and operated by the Monterey Lime Company. Unlike the Rockland Company, no information appears in the 1910 census regarding the existence of the Bixby settlement. The Monterey Lime Company bought out Charles Bixby's holding in 1906 upon his retirement to Monterey and constructed “an aerial tramway to transport lime by cable to the mouth of the creek, where it was hoisted aboard ship,” which would later appear in several of Robinson Jeffers poetry including *Thurso's Landing*, and the much shorter “Bixby's Landing.”⁴⁴ A bad winter storm several years later would wipe out many of the roads, including twenty-two bridges, and force the Monterey Lime Company to go out of business, essentially abandoning

43 Which, in and of itself is another complex issue of race, ethnicity, whiteness and immigration within the United States in the early twentieth century as Italians were often marked (socially) as non-white.

44 Woolfenden, 38.

their site.⁴⁵ Jeffers' "Bixby's Landing," written in the late 1920s, speaks to the abandoned Bixby Landing settlement, describing the evolution the machinery has taken into a more weathered and decayed part of the scenery. Lines like "The laborers are gone, but what a good multitude/Is here in return: the rich-lichened rock, the rose-tipped stone-crop, the constant/Ocean's voices" and "Wine-hearted solitude, our mother the wilderness/Men's failures are often as beautiful as men's triumphs, but your returnings/Are even more precious than your first presence" speak to the manner in which perceptions of the coast would change as the importance of conservation, preservation, and outsider's interests would rise in contrast with the earlier industrial use of the land – a topic which will be expanded upon in the following chapters.⁴⁶ For many, Jeffers' work would speak to the importance of the place of the beauty of the natural world within Big Sur's identity and, as seen here, nature's triumph over man's industrial intrusion into the landscape.

The short lived Bixby settlement at the limekilns echoes another short lived boomtown on the coast that in turn adds to the stories of gold rush boomtowns throughout the state. The south coast range, home to the Los Burros Mining District, saw gold fever come and go over the decades. The most famous years for the district were in the early 1890s when the town of Manchester (later renamed Mansfield), reached a (short-lived) peak population of nearly two hundred people, all engaged in mining operations within the district which was located near the south county line. The years 1911 to 1912 would also see a similar rise in the rejuvenation of mining operations in the district. The booster literature and newspaper articles over the years would occasionally give conflicting reports on the availability of gold in the region. In its 1889 publication, nearly fifteen years after the organization of the Los Burros Mining District, the

45 Woolfenden, 38.

46 Tim Hunt, ed., *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 167.

Monterey County Illustrated claims that “the most important mineral discovery which has ever been made in the county, and possibly in the State, are Los Burros gold mines...There is but little doubt that ere this book reaches the East there will be at Los Burros one of the liveliest mining camps in the state.”⁴⁷ Just a year before, the *Handbook to Monterey and Vicinity* claims that “gold has been discovered in several places in this range, but not in paying quantities,” which may have been the more accurate assessment of the region.⁴⁸ Randall A. Reinstedt, a local historian, writes of the Los Burros Mining District that “if it hadn't been for the isolation of the Los Burros area, the backbreaking work required to get the ore out, and the California argonauts' hesitation to chase 'another wild goose', strikes like the Last Chance may have proved the above prediction⁴⁹ a valid one. As it was, the Los Burros area never really boomed as did so many mining camps of California's famed gold country.”⁵⁰

The gold mining industry, almost more than any other extractive industry along the coast, painfully experienced the inconveniences associated with its location in such a remote and inaccessible location. While there was some small-scale shipping occurring in and out of the region, prior to the introduction of stamp mills the ore and dirt had to be transported across the mountains via donkey train and into the neighboring valleys. Even with the introduction of stamp mills, not every miner was able to afford them, and the question still remained of how to transport the heavy objects uphill from where the schooners would land. The mine's location in such a geologically faulted area, and near the home of many hot springs as well, resulted in “the grand old mine [Last Chance] eventually succumb[ing] to a flooded shaft, as pumps of the day

47 E.S. Harrison, pub., *Monterey County Illustrated: Resources, History, Biography* (1889), 10.

48 *The Handbook to Monterey and Vicinity*, 107.

49 Here Reinstedt is referencing the quote in *Monterey County Illustrated* regarding the potential boom of the district.

50 Randall A. Reinstedt, *Monterey's Mother Lode: A Pictorial History of Gold in the Santa Lucias* (Carmel, CA: Ghost Town Publications, 1977), 11.

were not powerful enough to keep an underground spring from sealing its doom,” a fate which would doom other mines as well.⁵¹

Despite the short-lived existence of the original mining boom in the Los Burros district, which ended before the 1900 census was taken, the possibility of a mother lode in the region has never been far from the public's memory. Since the establishment of the Mission San Carlos de Borromeo in 1770, the rumor of a lost Indian gold mine in the Santa Lucia mountains has persevered over the centuries. An essay that appeared in *The Overland Monthly* in 1916 titled “The Lost Mine in the Santa Lucias” speaks to these very rumors of the infamous quartz ledge that so many insist must exist. This story, as recounted by Charles Clark, tells of the journey one of his friends, a “Spanish Don,” had supposedly taken in 1848. The expedition follows Juan Soto, a laborer at the Don's ranch and, according to Clark, an Indian native to the Santa Lucias, into the mountains where they fail to find the mother lode as the creek is now covered as the result of a landslide. Throughout the essay, Clark intersperses Spanish words and phrases seemingly in an effort to evoke the feelings of the Spanish and Mexican eras – during which the alleged events occurred - that so many by that time probably connected with, and imprinted upon, the region. The end of the essay quotes a local Indian the author met years later as saying, “Senor, that is the Mystery of the Santa Lucias. Some day it will be solved,” referring to the supposed lost mine.⁵² This possibility for (re)discovery has been imprinted into the legend of the lost Indian mine in the mountains and has always resonated with potential prospectors whenever the call for gold has come up from the coast.

The two main rushes on the region occurred for only a few years each, and in both

⁵¹ Reinstedt, 11.

⁵² Charles Clark, “The Lost Mine in the Santa Lucias,” *Overland Monthly*, Oct. 1916.

instances shortly after the United States census was taken, so it becomes difficult to construct an idea of who might have been living and working in the district during this time. An article in *The Monterey Democrat* mentions that “the Los Burros was worked in a primitive way by Mexicans, and latterly by Chinamen,” which speaks to the racial make-up of the district in the years preceding the first large rush.⁵³ This statement also speaks to enduring racial divisions in the region as the author's use of “primitive” points to an association of Mexicans and Chinese with “primitive” culture and work culture. An 1888 Report of the State Mineralogist says of the district that “prior to 1887 no mineral veins of importance had been discovered” resulting mostly in the development of quicksilver and placer mines.⁵⁴ The report also points out that “At one time over one hundred Chinese were engaged in gold washing in the vicinity of Jolon, it being supposed that the land in that neighborhood was Government territory. It proved, however, to belong to the Milpitas Grant, and the owners compelled the Chinamen to discontinue their work.”⁵⁵ This population make-up is indicative of the type of mining taking place in the region at different times where Chinese and other marginalized groups started claims that would then either become abandoned or later integrated into Anglo claims. This is reflective of the trend in the mining industry during the infamous California Gold Rush where, as the years passed, larger corporations and mining operations took over claims established by others before them who were often of lower class and socially marked as non-white. Before the discovery of larger, more productive veins, much of the gold mining took the form of placer mining which was much more time and labor intensive and for a smaller profit. The discovery of large sources of gold brought in more Anglo outsiders with the capital available to invest in the equipment necessary to process

53 “Mines and Mining,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, June 30, 1888.

54 Irelan Jr., “Monterey County”, 405.

55 Ibid.

the ore as well as time and labor to spare to partake in this endeavor, ultimately displacing those working on smaller claims independently or possibly pulling them into their own labor force.

The pattern of the progression of the gold rushes in some ways builds off of the narrative of the “lost Indian mine.” Because there existed decades-old rumors about the presence of large quantities of gold, many individuals took up prospecting since they believed that *they* might be the one to strike the motherlode, or even uncover the lost mine. As the Los Burros Mining District became increasingly established as a mining district, it gathered more Anglo men with money who would establish, and invest in, mines and mining equipment. The increasing permanence of the district also ensured that only those with the capital (read: white Anglo modern) would be able to invest in a claim, and so thwart the potential for a more racially diversified (and prosperous) population in the region, outside of camp cooks and other laborers.

The final resource along the coast that received attention from newspapers and boosters alike is coal. Articles abounded throughout the regional papers detailing the positive prospects for coal in the region, but the only site of actual coal excavation appears to be located south of Point Lobos on what was originally known as the Rancho San Jose y Sur Chiquito, a Mexican-era land grant given to Marcellino Escobar occupying the land between the Carmel and Little Sur rivers. The Soberanes Ranch ultimately occupied much of the same land and is said to have occupied part of the original San Jose y Sur Chiquito land grant. This grant, like many others within the state, was subject to a litigation battle in the 1880s over who the rightful owner was. The description of the Carmel Coal Mine in *The Monterey Democrat* is almost verbatim the summary that appears in the 1888 Report of the State Mineralogist and reads as follows:

Some years ago a company was organized to develop coal mines at the Chiquito Rancho below Monterey. Considerable work was done and some coal shipped. A rail or tramway was built from the mine to the beach, a distance of five miles, and a chute constructed to

load vessels. Owing to dissensions in the company, and the fact that the land was in litigation, the mine was abandoned, and the railway and chute allowed to go to decay. Now that the title of the land has been settled it is presumed that the mine will be taken hold of by experienced parties, as it is believed that immense deposits of excellent coal exist in that vicinity.⁵⁶

An 1886 article in the *Monterey Argus* describes the end of the litigation battle as it names the rightful owners of the property, sole agent of the property, and gives a detailed description for the paths available to the settlers on the land once the land patent has been officially granted.⁵⁷ 1878 also saw several articles in the *Monterey Californian* reviewing the development and progress of the Carmel Coal Mine giving praise to the potential of the mine and infrastructure that would enable that “the coal can be transferred to steamers very rapidly and with very little expense.”⁵⁸ While the mine was in production, it perpetuated the racialized division of labor present throughout the extractive industries as “Chinese miners were employed to do the actual coal mining” at the Carmel Coal Mine.⁵⁹ The mine was in operation again for only a short period of time after the settlement of the land claims. A 1919 article in *The Carmel Pine Cone* briefly describes the trip some locals made to the abandoned mine, which would become just one manner in which both locals (to the region) and outsiders alike would come to experience Big Sur in its early years of tourism – through the exploration of abandoned industrial sites.⁶⁰

No matter how subtly or overtly they operated, racialized divisions of labor existed throughout the coast in a multitude of industries. While Chinese camp cooks in an industry filled with white woodsmen or miners is an obvious example of these divisions, and thus indicative of

56 Irelan Jr., “Monterey County”, 404.

57 “The Sur Chiquito Rancho,” *Monterey Argus* (Monterey, CA), Feb. 13, 1886.

58 The mine has been alternately and synonymously referred to as either the Carmel or Carmelo Coal Mine.

“The coal mine,” *Monterey Californian* (Monterey, CA), Nov. 12, 1878.

59 Vernon Aubrey Neasham, “The Historical Background of Point Lobos Reserve, State Park No. 48,” in Vernone Aubrey Nesham, ed., *History of California State Parks*, (Berkeley: State of California, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, 1937), 11. Written as part of Works Progress Administration Official Project #465-03-3-133.

60 “A Visit to the Old Coal Mine,” *Carmel Pine Cone*, Feb. 6, 1919.

who ultimately profits from the industry and the region's resources, the positioning of sometimes “racially ambiguous” men with Spanish surnames as vaqueros and farm laborers is also marked by the same divisions. These divisions also served to separate the migrant, dispensable, and racialized labor from the settled Anglo homesteaders as the vaqueros and cooks were often lodgers and not heads of large ranch households. However, a few mixed-race homesteading households existed on the coast and the male heads of house were often employed as vaqueros, and so remained subjugated to a largely Anglo social order. As the region began to evolve toward a tourist based economy, discourses surrounding race – especially with regards to Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Chinese, and Japanese – would become integral to how the region would evolve to sell itself as a tourist destination.

Even in more contemporary historical narratives of the region, authors such as Woolfenden would write that Escobar lost the Rancho San Jose y Sur Chiquito in a dice game. Though on the surface an amusing anecdote, the tale also tells us something about the continuing and implicit connection that many people make and have with Mexicans and Mexican-Americans and “vices” such as a gambling. Historically, this connection spoke to many concerns held by Anglo settlers about the morality of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans and, by association, their position and standing as “Americans” or potential Americans. These statements, however seemingly innocent, perpetuate narratives that position Mexicans and Mexican-Americans (and in the future, Chinese and Japanese as well) as inferior “Americans” that would influence future discourses and beliefs about the position of migrant, immigrant, and/or laborers of color in the extractive and tourist industries in the American West throughout the twentieth century and up to the present.

In addition to racialized systems and divisions of labor, Big Sur's resource based economy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was instrumental in forming the area's social, economic, and environmental landscape of today. Even amidst the transformation of the region's landscape, it would remain the focal point of a burgeoning tourism industry. The tourist does not recognize the impact that grazing has had on the hills on the coast, which is still visible today with their lack of young oak trees, and instead see the legacy that industries and companies have left in the naming of landings, parks, and trails along the coast. This impact on the place names of the region shows who held the power, and what they deemed important in marking and remembering the region as seen by the prevalence of the names of homesteading families and no mention of indigenous place names. While at times seemingly inconsequential, the naming of canyons, coves, ridges, and parks for the homesteading families speaks volumes to the power structure of the county as it played out throughout the different governing eras of the state. The privileging of the homesteading presence on the coast also points to the choice the tourism industry made in aligning its narrative with the larger narratives of the settler pioneers in the American West. This remains important through the region's development within a tourist economy as historical memory speaks to how the region wishes outsiders to identify it, and how it identifies itself.

Chapter 2

Desiring Wilderness: Shifting to Tourism in Big Sur's Economy

Tourism in the American West, and certainly within Big Sur, has created and continues to create dichotomous relationships between insider and outsider, native and neonative, participant and observer. Hal Rothman describes the development of tourism-based economies as a “process of scripting space, both physically and psychically, [that] defines tourist towns and resorts.”¹ This process of “scripting space” in turn redefines the local identity as the region alters its persona to fit an outsider's conceptualization of the place, which means that the region is now defined by the outsider instead of by the local. These scripted spaces then create the appearance of a native “authentic experience,” which is reflective of tourism's development within an industrial and capitalist society that has changed from consumption-based goals to experience-based ones. Rothman expands on this idea of consumption versus experience when he describes tourism as part of a culture that “was equally post-tangible, not about consuming things but about possessing experience.”² The tourism-based economy then ends up altering the very places it seeks to save.

This combination of scripted space and experience-oriented goals is key in understanding how tourism can have such dramatic effects in altering villages, towns, and whole regions, as these two facets of tourism reflect how outsiders dictate the local. The ultimate goal in centering the experience of the tourist reflects, in Rothman's words, how “tourism belongs to the modern and postindustrial, postmodern worlds,” since the tourist consumes experiences and not objects.³

1 Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 12.

2 Rothman, 19.

3 Rothman, 12-13.

Additionally, he highlights how the postindustrial world's “social structures and cultural ways are those of an extractive industry,” especially in the ways that people have an impact on the landscape and in the creation and maintenance of racialized divisions of labor.⁴

In the case of Big Sur specifically, we continue to see how the region profits from and exploits its own natural resources as it develops from its more industrialized and resource dependent economy into its tourism-based economy. While tourism advocates may not be cutting down redwoods anymore (in fact, many tourists would extol conservationist and preservationist tendencies and opinions), the same trees that brought income to Big Sur through the capitalist market would continue to bring in income through the tourist's desire to *experience* the famous and majestic redwood, among other sites and destinations. In addition, the same racialized divisions of labor that occurred in the extractive economy of the region continue into the tourist industry as white Anglos became the owners and managers of resorts and destinations and Chinese, Japanese, and even Filipino men and women would form the support and service staff of the same institutions.

Tourism often gets positioned as the alternative to a dying economy – hence its position as a postindustrial, but also colonial, economy. However, its position as a sort of economy of “last resort” brings about dilemmas within the local region that contribute to ways in which the outsider begins to (re)define the local. Martha Norkunas, in her work on tourism in Monterey, speaks not only to the altered regional identity that follows tourism, as Rothman does, but also to the way in which tourism can distort the history of the region as well through the use of “public memory.” She writes that, “a kind of tourist reality results—a streamlined version of the past—in which actual narratives of labor, social class, and ethnicity have been replaced by romance and

4 Rothman, 13.

nostalgia.”⁵ Memorials and commemorations in public spaces in turn help to create a public memory that caters to the reality envisioned by the tourist. This reframing of local history for an outsider audience is just one of many ways that tourism-based economies influence and change local identities.

The role of public and historical memory in tourism functions to situate their narratives of local histories within broader accepted national and institutional narratives. In Norkunas' discussion of the 1935 Historic Sites Act she writes that “the National Park Service, overwhelmed with requests, established guidelines according to which a site had to be of 'national significance.' Regional, minority, or class-related symbols were deemed inappropriate for historic preservation and efforts were directed towards the preservation of prominent structures and patriotic events,” thereby marking the ways in which the nation and its institutions (including the federal government) engaged in the project of ignoring important histories of people and places.⁶ In a similar fashion, John Walton in *Storied Land* discusses historical and public memory and public history and that “public history is constructed, not, in the main, for the purposes of posterity or objectivity, but for the aims of present action (conquest, social reform, building, political reorganization, economic transformation).”⁷ Here, Walton's insight can be applied to interpreting the Historic Sites Act as a part of the nation's project in public history that seeks to paint a picture of a nation that is free from internal conflict by focusing on patriotism and histories of those with power.⁸ Most often these patriotic narratives and histories of

5 Martha K. Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (Albany, Ny: State University of New York Press, 1993), 51.

6 Norkunas, 27.

7 John Walton, *Storied Land: Community and Memory in Monterey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 294.

8 The moment in which the Historic Sites Act was passed (1935) is also interesting to note in that the nation was in the midst of recovering from the Great Depression and so it was engaged in creating a unified national identity and other (political) projects of the era.

powerful individuals and institutions leave out the stories and presence of marginalized and racialized groups, and when they are included it is only to serve nationalist interests such as the participation of people of color in the national military. National trends and other projects in creating and forming public and historical memory can dictate and influence the way in which regions paint and build their collective identity by subtly (or not so subtly) prompting the inclusion and exclusion of various histories, peoples, and identities.

These formations of public and historical memory as well as regional identity have resulted in the tourist's association of the environment and landscape with Big Sur. In many ways, Rothman's description of "third nature-nature as spectacle,"⁹ positions "third nature" as "a natural world organized to acquire intangibles, experience, and cachet."¹⁰ This phrase, "third nature-nature as spectacle," speaks to the ways in which the environment, and the desire to experience certain environments, has monopolized Big Sur's regional identity as a site of pleasure derived from the landscape.

The role and presence of the environment and landscape in Big Sur has often overshadowed the congruent histories of industrialized landscapes, extractive economies, and the labor relations and dynamics intrinsic within those sites to the extent that they have become subsumed and relegated to state park side-notes and mini-regional histories in restaurant cookbooks. This transformation and evolution of regional identity from an extractive- to a tourism-based economy has, in many ways, placed the importance of the landscape over that of the workers and laborers.¹¹ The result includes mild historical amnesia with regards to the history

9 Rothman's "third nature" is an extension of William Cronon's first and second nature. Rothman writes that "If first nature was organized to feed and clothe the self and family, second nature's forms were designed to market to the world." (21)

10 Rothman, 27, 22.

11 The predominately Anglo homesteaders are still very much regarded as included in this landscape-centric narrative since: 1] for many of them, neither they nor their families still live there, and 2] many donated land to

of labor along the coast as it has allowed for historians, organizations, and individuals to pick and choose various aspects of their history to retell. This has also privileged the experience of the neonatives¹² – many of whom are white Anglo artists, authors, and musicians – over the stories of those who have not left establishments or place-names along the coast. I want to interrogate the ways in which the landscape has been prioritized over people and how that has permitted the erasure of complex interpersonal and institutionally supported relationships among the residents and laborers of the coast. Additionally, I also wish to examine the ways in which this notion of a “Spanish heritage” figures into the region as it appears time and time again in writings about the people of the region as a whole. This also erases the existence of not only the historical Mexican government in California while simultaneously upholding the era of Spanish colonialism, but the presence of Chinese and Japanese laborers and immigrants as well. This privileging of the landscape over people functions as a way for histories of marginalized peoples, and the presence of a racialized division of labor along the coast, to be minimized and further marginalized in order to sell a more palatable regional identity based on a wilderness ideal. I will trace these themes through the chapter as I discuss the early days of tourism, hunting and fishing, hot springs and resorts, neonatives, and protected lands.

The Early Days

The early days of tourism along the coast could hardly be called tourism, but they represent the beginnings of the hospitality industry along the coast. For several years around 1900, only two locales appear to consistently draw non-coast visitors and guests – The Idlewild Family Resort and Camp Grounds and the Pfeiffer Ranch Resort. An ad appears in the *Monterey*

be retained as government and/or protected land in one form or another and so contributed to the outsider's ideal of Big Sur as a protected environment.

12 Neonatives, as used by Rothman, are individuals who relocate to locations after they have become tourist destinations (i.e. Santa Fe, Aspen, etc.)

New Era in the fall of 1901 for The Idlewild situated “On the coast. Among the Mountains & Redwoods. The Best Trout and Ocean Fishing on the Coast” and “one of the prettiest mountain and seaside resorts in California.” The resort supplied a weekly stagecoach that would take visitors the twenty-five mile journey down the coast to the Little Sur River, just north of Point Sur, at which “three dollars per week pays the rent of a large tent, on a platform, furnished with stove, cooking utensils, dishes, cots, and mattresses, for six people. Provisions...are to be had on the ground.”¹³ This advertisement, as early as 1901, highlights many of the themes that appear in the tourism industry in Big Sur throughout the decades. It follows the establishment of conservationist societies and organizations that advocated the development of tourism in these beautiful wild regions so that individuals would feel compelled to conserve and preserve them. The claims that The Idlewild is “one of the prettiest” and its location “among the Mountains & Redwoods” speaks to the proprietor's acknowledgement of the appeal of these objects and sites within the state and, furthermore, singles out the redwoods as an attraction in and of itself.

Already we have seen the ways in which conservationists have extolled the virtues of the redwood tree and its association with the development and, ultimately, colonization of the West. The insistence that the region is “free from coast winds and fogs” is also important in understanding how Californians, and Americans as a whole, understood and interacted with the natural environment at the turn of the century.¹⁴ While today, many would consider a foggy day to be nothing other than a nuisance, at the end of the nineteenth century much of the country still strongly believed that environments and weather influenced a person's health and that the fog and coastal winds were a few of the environmental influences that could penetrate the porous and

¹³ “The Idlewild,” *Monterey New Era* (Monterey, CA), Oct. 9, 1901.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

permeable body. As Linda Nash argues in *Inescapable Ecologies*, the discourse on the settlement of Anglos in the American West was tied up as much in discourses of disease and conquest as it was in the preservation of “whiteness.”¹⁵ Through the Anglo settlers' habitation in previously non-white spaces, the diseases associated with these environments threatened the very racial identity that the settlers utilized to define and differentiate themselves with in positions of privilege and power.

Finally, the mention of “the best trout and ocean fishing on the coast” points to the ways in which social position influenced one's relationship to the environment – particularly regarding how activities such as hunting and fishing could be coded for class or place with regards to the purpose of such activities.¹⁶ The statement that they possess “the best trout and ocean fishing on the coast” would only be important to those who did not live on the coast, and did not rely on the local game and wildlife to feed themselves and their families throughout the year. Instead, this phrase speaks to those persons who could afford to take time off to make the journey down the coast and engage in such activities as hunting and fishing as unnecessary for their survival.

While the Idlewild no longer exists, the Pfeiffer Ranch Resort is a continuing presence on the coast. The establishment of the Resort is one of the most oft told stories within the local histories of the region regarding the homesteaders and the beginnings of tourism. The Resort was contained within the grounds of the Pfeiffer family homestead and entertained numerous “hunters, fishermen, and other visitors” who might happen to be locals or otherwise. Of the

15 Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 17-18.

I am referring to ideas in the first chapter of Nash's book, which deals with the intersections of disease, race, and colonization in the American West.

16 This point will be expanded upon later in the chapter in the section on Hunting and Fishing. Karl Jacoby's *Crimes Against Nature* delves further into this question of land use and the ways in which different groups of people define what is “appropriate” usage.

resort, Woolfenden writes that “in the openhanded style of the old Spanish days, John Pfeiffer refused to let his wife charge a nickel. But as a result of the freeloaders, they were going further and further into debt.”¹⁷ The story continues by Mrs. Pfeiffer's discovery that a lodger was “beating a mule with a heavy picket” and from that moment she charged for feed, room, and board.¹⁸ Here I wish to elaborate on Woolfenden's phrase “in the openhanded style of the old Spanish days.” The history of Monterey and the region is full of references to a Spanish past and influence. A passage, for instance, from *The Handbook to Monterey and Vicinity* points to the manner in which Anglo writers and boosters advertised the region. This publication writes that “the character of her [Monterey's] inhabitants—good-tempered, kind and hospitable, easy-going and listless, as are all the Spanish-speaking races—they lived to enjoy life easily and comfortably, not to be harassed with the cares and turmoils attending energy and enterprise. Nature was bountiful to them, and they lived on Nature’s gifts. Mirth, music, and 'mañana,' with just sufficient exertion as was absolutely requisite to provide for their necessities, constituted their rule of life.”¹⁹ Walton also touches on the subject when he explains that “Spanish California was refashioned as a commodity traded among buyers and sellers in the developing heritage market,” thereby focusing on the era of missions, presidios, and ranches and the “easy life.”²⁰ This emphasis on the “Spanish” also highlights the European influence on the region and ignores the Mexican era along with the mixed, mestizo, and hybrid peoples and cultures that resulted from Spain's colonial presence.

The Pfeiffer Ranch Resort differs from The Idlewild in that in the early twentieth century,

17 John Woolfenden, *Big Sur: A Battle for the Wilderness, 1869-1985* (Pacific Grove, CA: The Boxwood Press, 1985), 11.

18 Woolfenden, 11.

19 *The Hand Book to Monterey and Vicinity* (Monterey, 1875), 24.

20 Walton, 215-216.

there exist no advertisements in the regional papers for the Pfeiffer Ranch Resort in the same manner that they exist for The Idlewild. So while tourism is typically conceived of as an industry that caters to the outsider, I wish to argue that the hospitality industry (in this instance, food and lodging) can exist for a more “insider” and local populace. By including the “insider” within the hospitality industry, which I also frame as a part of the early development of the tourism industry, it shows that this resort at least was integrated with the extractive industries of the day by including hunters and fishermen (whether or not they are locals) and also as potential resting places for those engaged in driving livestock to market in the farther distant cities. In many ways, before an establishment could become successful with the tourists, it had to be open to and accepted by the insiders and locals as they would help to ensure that it prospered regardless of the seasonal nature of the tourist season. Even today, many of the establishments that cater to tourists also have to become accepted by the locals and remain accessible to them.²¹

Hunting & Fishing

Hunters and fishermen are nothing new to the realm and stories of “wilderness” experiences or the lives of homesteaders and settlers throughout the United States. As I discussed in Chapter One, hunting and fishing for the local and long-term residents of the coast often provided part of their food supply. However, that does not mean that they were the only people benefiting from the plentiful number of game animals and fish along the coast – many individuals, especially in the earlier years in the late nineteenth century, came to visit the coast solely for the purpose of hunting and fishing activities. In the 1880s the *Monterey County*

²¹ The Big Sur Bakery is a good contemporary example of the sort of institution that was started by transplants from Los Angeles who trained at the Culinary Institute of America. The Introduction to their book *The Big Sur Bakery Cookbook: A Year in the Life of a Restaurant* (2009) details many of the trials and challenges in accommodating the desires of locals while simultaneously entrenching themselves within a tourism-based economy.

Illustrated celebrated the variety and number of game along the coast. They wrote, “game abounds. The finest trout streams of Central California are in these mountains, deer are numerous, and quail, wild pigeons, and rabbits are to be found without hunting. In earlier days there were many grizzly bears here, and a few relics still remain, but they are seldom seen.”²² In this passage, however, the writers leave out the existence of mountain lions which posed (and continue to pose) threats to the property of the inhabitants of the region.

At the same time that the region's boosters and advertisers were highlighting the numerous game available, they were also calling out to men inhabiting a specific kind of masculinity – the sportsman. The *Monterey County Illustrated* writes that “if he is a sportsman, then he can go to the Santa Lucia Mountains, where 'troutlets leap in a pool' and where game is plentiful. Is he tired of the cyclone-swept, blizzard-chilled, malaria-stricken regions of the East? Then come to Monterey County. Bring a little capital, the more the better, plenty of energy and pluck, and ten years hence he will thank the fellow who writes this.”²³ Not only does this passage reiterate the availability of plentiful game along the coast, but it also calls to the sportsman – specifically the white Anglo sportsman from the East. Additionally, this excerpt sets out to compare the weather, and incidentally healthfulness, of the region with that of the East and thus proclaim its superiority.

Written in the 1880s, this passage also reflects the concerns that Americans had at the time of the nature of the Western climate where settlers were still sparse and, as Nash argues, were trying to negotiate and preserve their whiteness amidst weather and climate that would try and counter their racial identity and consequently position of power. She goes on to write that

22 E.S. Harrison, pub., *Monterey County Illustrated: Resources, History, Biography* (1889), 8.
23 Ibid.

“while the repeated, almost obligatory, insistence on the region's healthfulness might say little about the actual prevalence of disease, it suggests that perceptions of health were important, even critical, to understanding a foreign place,” a place that the exotic and distant American West still inhabited in the national imagination.²⁴

The hunting and fishing activities that attracted outsiders to the coast from the end of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century rested on the idea of experiencing “wild” and “foreign” places. However, these activities did not exist outside of the realm of the state, no matter how rural or “wild” the places these people might be visiting. Karl Jacoby's *Crimes Against Nature* explores the ways in which the state and conservation acted between insiders and outsiders on both private and government land in the United States. One of the framing concepts in the book is that “law and its antithesis—lawlessness--are therefore twin axes around which the history of conservation revolves. To achieve its vision of a rational, state-managed landscape, conservation erected a comprehensive new body of rules governing the use of the environment. But to create new laws also meant to create new crimes.”²⁵ These new crimes are what set apart the local from the tourist sportsman. A lengthy article appears in the *Monterey New Era* in 1904 titled “Proposed Game Law” that describes the debates and controversy occurring over a new game law which would allow for wild game to be killed, but not sold. The author of the article argues that “the people of California are willing to prohibit both the sale and the slaughter of game for a term of years. But they will not consent to a preserve game law which gives the right to kill to a few to the exclusion of the many.”²⁶ The article thereby speaks to many of the same debates that Jacoby writes about in that, in this era, hunting wild game still remained an act of

24 Nash, 34.

25 Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

26 “Proposed Game Law,” *Monterey New Era*, Dec. 14, 1904.

sustenance and subsistence for many who did not want to sacrifice this access to appease a few thousand sportsmen. Furthermore, the author writes that “under its provisions hundreds of deer have been taken and the venison permitted to spoil.” The article then also addresses the divisions and differing social practices between subsistence hunting and sports hunting by implying that the few sports hunters that would benefit from this bill are wasteful and destructive of the resources of the region that they personally do not depend on for their livelihoods.

Numerous other articles appear about people violating game laws by either fishing before the season has opened or catching abalone that are smaller than regulations allow them to be harvested. A 1921 article in the *Monterey Daily Cypress* refers to such an incident and writes that “George Williams, whom he [the game warden] charged with violation of the fish laws for having abalones under size, when he gathered up the coast at Franklin point, pleaded guilty and paid a fine of \$25. Seven Japanese, arrested at the same place on the same charge, appeared and their cases went over until the 25th.”²⁷ While Franklin Point is considerably north of Big Sur, abalone game laws, as discussed in Lydon's *The Japanese in the Monterey Bay Region*, were often racially charged and, in many ways, were created because of white concern that the Japanese were effectively a menace and threat to the abalone population. Lydon writes that “since locals didn't eat abalone, the movement to restrict the Japanese divers had very little to do with the abalone and very much to do with the Japanese” as the region passed some of the first Abalone fishing regulations in 1899.²⁸

Once the non-Japanese locals developed a desire for the abalone (either as a food or as a souvenir), they became concerned about the abalone population. This concern stemmed from the

27 “Abalones Small: Fined \$25.00,” *Monterey Daily Cypress* (Monterey, CA), April 23, 1921.

28 Sandy Lydon, *The Japanese in the Monterey Bay Region: A Brief History* (Capitola, CA: Capitola Book Company, 1997), 83.

commercial harvesting of abalone by the Japanese, and the declining abalone population resulted in state-wide legislation regarding the size and amount of abalone that could be harvested. However, the abalone population was not depleted because of the Japanese. The abalone is one of the desired food choices of the sea otter which was hunted to near extinction in the mid-eighteenth century, and following the decimation of the sea otter population the abalone population boomed in numbers beyond what it had previously been. Once these numbers became depleted (but not dangerously so), the locals blamed the Japanese for this occurrence while not realizing that the abalone population was initially artificially high. In addition, many tourists and visitors were responsible for taking undersized abalone and abalone out of season all the while blaming the Japanese immigrants for the depletion in an era filled with anti-Japanese sentiment. The classed and raced social divisions present along the coast, because of earlier and concurrent industries, influenced the ways in which tourists interacted with the local environment and how they conceived of their relationship to it.

Hot Springs

While hunting and fishing, along with other “outdoorsy” endeavors, facilitated the beginnings of tourism in the region, as the 1910s and 1920s progressed and more visitors wanted to experience the region in greater comfort, Big Sur became relatively well known as home to several hot springs accompanied by a budding resort industry. Three hot springs were established within the Santa Lucia mountain range – Tassajara Springs, Little Sur Hot Springs, Slate's Springs – and all have appeared in newspaper and booster publications at one point or another throughout this time period. In an issue of *The Monterey Democrat* they appeared under the section “Health and Pleasure,” thus signifying the connection that people made between the

healthfulness and restorative properties of the springs.

The description of the Tassajara Springs in this collection includes many of these same references to healthfulness and salubrity. This account also evokes the knowledge of the local Native Americans of the place, as the author writes that “tradition says that the Indians were aware of the wonderful curative properties of these springs in early days, and used to come hundreds of miles to visit them.”²⁹ While the author acknowledges the long standing knowledge of the springs and their “curative properties,” starting in the 1910s the springs are held up as a potential for development. The same article states that “men with energy and capital have lately taken hold of them and propose to make them one of the notable health resorts in the State,” and so do what the Indians and Mexicans failed to accomplish with the springs – turn them into a profitable, capitalist establishment that has “developed” the resources of the region for profit, accessibility, and recreation.³⁰ According to this article, these men intend to develop the springs into a full fledged resort that includes “a neat hotel out of the sandstone so abundant in the neighborhood. A dam will be thrown across a narrow gorge of the large stream flowing by the springs, thus backing up the water for a mile and a half, furnishing a large body of water for fishing and boating.”³¹ While the promoters seek to establish the springs as “one of the notable health resorts in the state,” they also play out the “rugged” experience that so many people searched for by providing unobtrusive access to fishing. A 1934 ad for the springs proclaims “you've had vacations before, but life is new at Tassajara” while it also speaks to the recreational tourism experience that it provides for its guests.³²

29 “Tassajara Springs,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, (Salinas, CA), June 30, 1888.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Advertisement, *Carmel Pine Cone*, (Carmel, CA), July 13, 1934.

The descriptions for the Little Sur Hot Springs also assert the proliferation of wild game as well as the potential for development. Slate's Springs however, as it exists further down the coast from the Little Sur and beyond the reach of the earlier roads, does not evoke the same potential for a resort that the previous two do. The article says that, "little has been done toward making the place a health resort on account of its distance from the railroad and the difficulty in getting there."³³ So while both the Tassajara and Little Sur remained fairly inaccessible, there were sufficient county and other roads near enough to make extension of infrastructure, transportation, and development feasible.

This type of "recreational tourism," embodied in the springs and resort development, is part of broader recreational and tourism development throughout the west. Hal Rothman explores the differing factors that contributed to the development of this particular type of tourism, and argues that "during the 1920s and after broader distribution of increased wealth, better transportation systems, and easier access to remote places initiated the rapid development of nationally marketed recreational tourism."³⁴ Though Rothman speaks of the 1920s as the beginning of recreational tourism, in Big Sur and Monterey County it appears much earlier but not on quite the same scale that occurs in the later decades. Since many of these writings on the springs come from promotional literature, they sought to invite individuals to the region to further invest and develop its resources and economy, including its tourism and resort industries.

The language used surrounding the springs reflects the ways in which the land, and this resource specifically, was included and wrapped up in perceptions and discourses surrounding the health and healthfulness of the region. While consumption or tuberculosis is not mentioned as

33 "Slate's Springs," *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, June 30, 1888.

34 Rothman, 23-24.

a disease that can be cured by the hot springs, Linda Nash writes that “as the century wore on, California would become well known for the 'wilderness cure' and recognized as a center for altitude therapy in the treatment of consumption.”³⁵ According to *The Monterey Democrat*, the Little Sur Hot Springs are also “very beneficial for rheumatism, gout, sciatica, scrofula, dyspepsia and kindred complaints.”³⁶ The discourse surrounding the hot springs and their resorts as a medium for health and treatment fits into the conception of California as a state known for its cures and relief from ailment, since these associations drew many settlers, tourists, and neonatives to the region. While there are also many different ways to interpret the meaning of “wilderness” as it appears in Nash's excerpt, the springs within the Santa Lucias existed outside of an easily accessible environment, and, as written in an *Overland Monthly* essay, “where nobody comes who does not have to.”³⁷ In many ways, the hot springs and their resorts functioned as both a transition from local to tourist desires and an intersection of the two, as well as a shift in the region's tourism development from hunting and fishing to a more development centered economy.

Neonatives

As Big Sur created more of a name for itself as a destination, it set the ground for a new set of groups to become interested in Big Sur's long-term development. These individuals often manifested themselves in a new group of visitor-residents that Hal Rothman calls “neonatives.” In his book *Devil's Bargains*, Hal Rothman writes that “neonatives replaced locals, creating the oddly postmodern spectacle of newcomers imitating locals for visitors to give the outsiders what

35 Nash, 55.

36 “Little Sur Hot Springs,” *Monterey County: its extent, area, location, climate, topography, soils and productions*, June 30, 1888.

37 L. Maynard Dixon, “Two Pictures of an Unknown Bit of the Monterey Coast: II. – Among the People 'Down the Coast,’” *Overland Monthly*, Oct., 1897.

they were paying for: reality as the tourist understood it.”³⁸ The neonative then typically takes on the characteristics and identity of the region as if they were “native” to the locale. The neonative also (typically) embodies a differing set of allegiances than the so-called “natives.” Rothman writes that “the people who advocated commercial economic use of land were natives; those who preserved the scenery and fauna were typically neonative,” and as such since their income often did not come from their new home; the neonatives also “embraced the transformed ethos,” of the region as it delved further and further into a scripted tourist landscape.³⁹ The neonative's embrace of the transformed and scripted landscape often occurs because it is usually this very same landscape under transformation that they fall in love with during their own vacations to these sites.

Along Big Sur, this plays out most noticeably in the settlement of writers and artists along the coast in the early twentieth century. Even today, some of the most iconic images of Big Sur's inhabitants are of the artists and “free souls” that started moving to the region in the 1920s. Even as early as the 1910 census, artists begin to appear whose industry is in painting, and landscape painting more specifically. The 1920 census lists more individuals whose occupations are artist and author with such “industries” as painting pictures, books, short stories, and fiction.

While the artists and neonatives were moving into Big Sur because it embodied a set of values and aesthetics that the newcomers desired, Big Sur continued to experience the same racialized and class-based divisions that existed within its extractive industries, some of which were accentuated by the neonatives. As an example, several of these authors and artists are listed in proximity to a staff of people whose industry is listed as “resort” and includes several Chinese

38 Rothman, 26.

39 Rothman, 137, 201.

men and Japanese men and women who were cooks, a porter, maid, and fish washer. Further, the foreman and manager of this same resort are married, American-born men with English surnames.

The 1920s saw the expansion of construction and development along what is considered today the Carmel Highlands, just south of Point Lobos. The development along the Highlands stands out from previous residences along the coast in that this new construction was not based on homestead claims and instead became the property of an elite class of people seeking second homes. Many full page advertisements appear in the *Carmel Pine Cone* in the early 1920s for new homes along the Highlands. One ad writes “Carmel Highlands, the most beautiful spot in the world, is ideally located and has a climate that is almost perfect” and that “if you do not get in on the ground floor...you are sure to regret it later,” thus implying the limited availability of property along the coast.⁴⁰ This new interest in real estate also points to the commercialization of the land, and the perception of the land as an investment rather than a livelihood. Another ad contains a full page photograph of a lone house on a bluff overlooking a rocky coast and it claims that “each building site enables him [the architect] to visualize this wonderful section with unique residence creations” and so highlights the exceptional quality of these homes that do not exist within residential developments.⁴¹ To further emphasize the unique nature of the property and its potential, it describes the home seen as “a type of Carmel Highlands residence, recently erected of stone quarried from its front yard, where nature has placed an abundant supply.” These homes exist as part of a wave of new housing construction all along the coast as outsiders and neophytes sought to create for themselves an “authentic” retreat that emphasized their natural

40 Advertisement, *Carmel Pine Cone*, June 8, 1922.

41 Advertisement, *Carmel Pine Cone*, May 5, 1921.

surroundings.

The Carmel Development Company envisioned development along the coast as an extension of the second homes and “artist's colony” prevalent in nearby Carmel. The company was intimately involved in the development of the Highlands and is just one of several individuals and organizations involved in the development of homes and resorts along the coast. Other individuals and groups also had visions for the coast, especially in its development and transformation into the home of world-class resorts. In 1930 a man from Carmel Valley, John Marble, purchased four hundred acres from a local family, the Gamboas, and later sold it to “Marion Hollins of Pebble Beach, a noted woman golfer and polo player who was also a real estate broker.”⁴² Woolfenden describes her efforts with “Frank Horton and Warren Gorrell in buying up the land between Dolan Creek and Limekiln Creek, including the property owned by the Danis, Gamboas, Avilas, and Borondas. Horton and Gorrell had operated a guest ranch in Wyoming and visualized a similar spread on the Big Sur coast.”⁴³ This area includes Big Creek, and what is now known as the Big Creek State Reserve. The aspirations of Hollins, Horton and Gorrell are nothing new in the Big Creek region since “in the late 1920s the scattered homesteads and pioneering families that had characterized Big Creek since the 1880s began to disappear. In their place appeared wealthy individuals who consolidated the small holdings into one large land parcel. Those who had earned their living on the land moved out or died, and the new owners used the land instead for recreation, business ventures, or vacation homes.”⁴⁴

The rise of the neonative in Big Sur indicates the impact that declining extractive

42 Woolfenden, 55.

43 Woolfenden, 55.

44 Susan E. Georgette, “In the Rough Land to the South: An Oral History of the Lives and Events at Big Creek, Big Sur, California,” *Environmental Field Program Publication*, No. 5, (University of California at Santa Cruz, 1981), 38-39.

industries had on the coast and the ways in which residents sought to adapt to these changes in the economy. The events in Big Creek and Carmel Highlands in particular highlight the manner in which “visitors of the 1920s began a recognizable modern trend: they traveled primarily to see different things but also to escape the pace of their life in the industrial world,” which still remains a fundamental aspect of the discourse and literature surrounding tourism to and residence in Big Sur.⁴⁵ Many of these second homes also necessitated the employment of locals as caretakers for the homes and properties since the owners did not occupy them year round. The foundations of the home seen at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park in Big Sur is an example of one of these homes. Even though the state park is named after Julia Pfeiffer Burns, the property did not belong to her, but instead named for her as she and her husband, both born and raised in Big Sur, acted as caretakers for the property. The presence of the newcomers became then another layer of the social and labor divisions along the coast as the newcomers arrived with more money, employed local residents, and had a different relationship to the environment.

Protected Lands

As the above examples suggest, new visions of the land and its proper use were emerging alongside the beginning of a tourist economy. The establishment of the Monterey National Forest Reserve in 1906 signaled the beginning of an era in which land preservation and conservation would become central in identifying and defining Big Sur's regional identity. Only one forest ranger is listed in the 1910 and 1920 census for the entire reserve which started out at 335,195 acres – approximately eleven times the size of the City of San Francisco or one-third the size of Rhode Island. This early forest reserve, which would later become the Los Padres National Forest and Ventana Wilderness Area, spoke to the desires of some for protection and preservation

⁴⁵ Rothman, 149.

of the land, environment, and game within. The turn of the twentieth century saw non-state affiliated individuals and organizations, such as the Save the Redwoods League, pushing for the preservation of the land at Point Lobos, north of the Ventana Wilderness Area. Eventually the land would become the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve and part of state-wide efforts in its conservation. The Pfeiffer Redwood State Park in the Big Sur Valley, later renamed the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, became established as a state park in 1934 amidst increasing accessibility to the location by automobile as well as further development of the Pfeiffer Ranch Resort.

Big Sur and its inhabitants have an interesting and, in many ways, atypical relationship to the establishment of protected lands. Throughout the decades the settlers and homesteaders have used the land for subsistence and sustenance as well as providing a source of monetary income. However, many of these same persons sought out government protection for their lands as the region developed. In 1919 an article appeared in the *Carmel Pine Cone* titled “Forest Service Control Wanted by Landowners” that goes on to say that “it appears to be the fear of the petitioners, owners of the land in that section, which has been of value for grazing purposes only, will be gobbled up by outside interests under the operation of dummy entrants. If the land is placed under the administration of the Forest Service it will be subject to its rules and may be used by nearby settlers upon payment of grazing fees.”⁴⁶ As discussed earlier, the 1920s witnessed a drastic change in the development of the region as more and more individuals sought to establish second homes for themselves along the coast largely due to the environmental appeal of the region. This also speaks to the ways in which the locals used the land for their livelihood while the neonatives wished to use it to their own ends which often meant as second homes and sites of recreation and leisure, albeit in an often “rugged” manner. Since the land “has been of

46 “Forest Service Control Wanted by Landowners,” *Carmel Pine Cone*, Oct. 9, 1919.

value for grazing purposes only,” and in Big Sur this would mean a lack of dramatic canyons, mountain slopes, and forested areas, outside developers would see this place as an ideal location for housing development as it remained accessible enough to Carmel and Monterey yet would not be under threat by preservation efforts. Rothman writes of a distinction between the sacred and the profane in that “tourism divided the world into sacred and profane space; sacred space merited preservation, being frozen in a fictive moment in the past, but profane space could be developed so that those who sought sacred space could have customary comforts.”⁴⁷ In this case, this grazing land was the profane that could be developed to supply comfort to those who wished to enjoy the sacred. This article references Mill Creek as the site of contestation, which is situated several miles up the coast from the Little Sur River, Little Sur Hot Springs, Pfeiffer Ranch Resort, and Big Sur, as well as the future home of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park.

The Pfeiffers, one of the early homesteading families in the region, sold seven hundred acres of land to the state for the creation of Pfeiffer Redwood State Park. In a newspaper article from 1934 following the creation of the park, it writes that “the Pfeiffer ranch has long been the camping grounds of fishermen and hunters. It is on the edge of a great stretch of forest reserve, the Santa Barbara forests, which runs, zigzagging, down into San Luis Obispo county, the watershed of the Santa Lucias. Many are the trout streams and marvelous is the hunting in this territory. As a state park, Pfeiffers will be a strong attraction to lovers of nature in the raw.”⁴⁸ While a locally established family has sold land to the state to ensure its protection from development, the resort operation that the family ran here still facilitated recreational hunting and fishing practiced by outsiders and tourists. Additionally, their proclamation that it “will be a

47 Rothman, 88.

48 “Another State Park,” *Carmel Pine Cone*, Jan. 5, 1934.

strong attraction to lovers of nature in the raw” further speaks to the ways in which Big Sur's regional identity has been created surrounding its rugged environment.

These statements about enjoying rugged nature speak to a largely white audience who has the means to live comfortably, as this framing erases the presence of non-homesteading individuals who are reliant on the land for their livelihoods. Since the paper is not a Big Sur paper, this statement defines the park's attraction through the lens of an outsider and so has contributed to ways in which other tourists and outsiders will expect to experience the Park. Even though the park has evoked an expectation of “nature in the raw,” Don Morton, part of the writer's project of the Works Project Administration, writes in 1937 that in the park, “shower baths, wash trays, ironing boards and plugs for electric irons provide all the comforts of home for camping housewives.”⁴⁹ After just a few short years and the opening of Highway 1, Pfeiffer Redwood State Park has been transformed from “nature in the raw” to a place that provides “all the comforts of home for camping housewives.”

While Big Sur may appear to be unique in the locals' participation in the conservation and preservation efforts, these individuals and families were also those that had been well established on the coast, often had children who moved away from the coast, and lived further north and so benefited economically from increasing development north of them as well as the construction of the highway. Later decades also saw the establishment of the Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, home to a family that resided there for only a few decades, and of Limekiln State Park, site of the former limekiln industry on the southern end of the coast. As with Point Lobos, which drew on the efforts of the Save-the-Redwoods League and other outsider interests, these efforts, as Jacoby

49 Don Morton, “Pfeiffer's Redwood State Park, State Park No. 49,” in Vernone Aubrey Nesham, ed., *History of California State Parks*, (Berkeley: State of California, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, 1937), 1. Written as part of Works Progress Administration Official Project #465-03-3-1331.

writes, drew “on a vocabulary of protection and preservation, conservationists consistently portrayed the areas affected by their policies as uniquely natural spaces.”⁵⁰ As the WPA writes of Point Lobos in 1937, “Although the reserve is retained as a primitive area, the signs of man are everywhere abundant. Some of the uses have been quaint and picturesque; most have been economic. It remains for the State, through her scientists and custodians, who have spent much time in studying the area, to preserve it from any further such use, whereby the beauty and atmosphere may be marred.”⁵¹ While the writer has recognized the presence of people on that land, they still follow that this place is “uniquely natural.”

Jacoby positions wilderness as an “artifact of modernity, a concept employed by conservationists to naturalize the transformations taking place in rural America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”⁵² The modernity of the landscape and countryside exists not only within the discourse of conservationism, but in the more general shape and development of the “modern American countryside...a place where market relationships and wage labor predominated...and where the state played a powerful managerial role.”⁵³ The landscape seen by conservationists was not by any means “natural” or otherwise preserved from the influence of humans, yet the efforts undertaken in the preservation of the land often ignored or placed little value on the existing economies of the region as the landscape became central to the burgeoning tourist development and the cessation of the coast's extractive market economy. However, wage labor would continue and even strengthen its presence as homesteads and

50 Jacoby, 197.

51 Vernon Aubrey Neasham, “The Historical Background of Point Lobos Reserve, State Park No. 48,” in Vernone Aubrey Neasham, ed., *History of California State Parks*, (Berkeley: State of California, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, 1937), 15. Written as part of Works Progress Administration Official Project #465-03-3-133.

52 Jacoby, 198.

53 Jacoby, 198.

agriculture declined and resorts, restaurants, and tourism boomed to create a division between the incoming neonatives, tourists, and locals who were split between the managers and owners and the waged employees within those same establishments.

The Automobile and The Highway

The expansion of the wagon and automobile roads down the coast contributed to both the land's changing landscape as well as how the regional tourism economy altered and adapted itself to accommodate the needs of the automobile tourist. The construction of the Carmel-San Simeon cemented the presence of tourists along the coast and also helped contribute into the automobile tourist's understandings of the landscape and environment that they were both a part of, yet separated from behind their windshield. The advent of automobile tourism has also been heralded as bringing about the “democratization of tourism” as more and more Americans were able to access and afford automobiles to explore destinations close to home.

While David Louter in his book *Windshield Wilderness* focuses on roads within National Parks, his book remains instrumental in understanding the position of the relationship between roads and wilderness along the Big Sur coast. In many ways, the whole of the Big Sur coast is considered to be contained within the idea of “wilderness,” and so the construction of its highway reflected those very ideas as seen through the construction of numerous turn-outs positioned for the tourist's gaze onto the surrounding environment. In many ways, Louter's argument that “parks would seem to be ideal expressions—authentic representations of the natural world—to a mobile audience accustomed to viewing nature through a windshield,” connects with Rothman's idea that the outsider and neonative have more of a role in defining and creating the identity of a place.⁵⁴ The construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway along the

⁵⁴ David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle:

Big Sur coast occurred because of outside desires to make the region more accessible to tourism and recreation due to their own ideas about the representation and identity of the region's identity. These desires existed amidst race, labor, and class divisions among and between the locals and outsiders. The commercialization of the experience of the coast would soon follow the establishment of the highway as hot springs would turn into resorts and retreat centers and second homes would continue to grow along the coast.

University of Washington Press, 2006), 167.

Cementing Tourism: The Construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway

The construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway changed the economy, life, and environment of the coast. The opening ceremonies in June of 1937, attended by local, regional, and national dignitaries and politicians, marked a turning point for Big Sur. The highway solidified Big Sur's dependence on a growing tourist economy since, for the first time, it allowed unimpeded automobile travel from Carmel to San Simeon. Instead of a tortuous day long journey on wagon and horseback to travel a mere twenty or more miles down the coast, the same journey could now be taken in relative comfort in only a few hours. However, the highway did not just appear over night. Almost two decades of lobbying, legislation, and construction went behind the development of what is now considered one of the most spectacular scenic highways in the nation. This lobbying, from the 1910s through the 1930s, and subsequent construction and development, coincided with an era whose philosophy throughout many of the National Parks in the West Coast dictated that roads and machines could coexist with nature, and would often provide a more intimate experience with it. This attitude greatly influenced the manner in which support was garnered for the project and would help dictate how people would view the highway after its completion.

In many ways, the construction of, and mobilization for, the highway reflects Big Sur's negotiation with its position in the developing economies of the American West. This occurred in the midst of Big Sur trying to retain its unique character and identity as an enduring stronghold of the “pioneering spirit” that has so characterized the region. The development of the highway encompasses state-wide political battles, local contention over zoning ordinances, the varied

forms of government-sponsored labor during the years of the Great Depression and New Deal, and environmental consequences of intensive earth moving projects. The racialized division of labor continued to play an important role in the highway development since prison labor was used in the construction of the highway, and the prison labor was also made up of a proportionately higher number of non-white inmate-laborers. This chapter will focus on these themes of race, labor, and belonging as it examines the place of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway along the Big Sur coast. I will begin with a brief overview of the history of the highway as it moves from poorly funded legislation to a federally sponsored project involving the use of labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps and prisoners from San Quentin State Prison. From this overview I will then go further in depth into the construction of the highway including the labor and environmental forces within its development. The racial, class, and regional diversity in the labor make-up points to the changing dynamics of the region as it becomes opened up to more outside involvement. In addition to the labor, the highway's relationship to the environment speaks to the ways in which landscape architects and developers saw the ways in which automobiles and their passengers should negotiate their presence with their surroundings as they constructed both the highway and the landscapes around it. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which the development and opening of the highway interacted with the region as a whole and how this affected Big Sur's relationship to the greater Monterey Bay Region and California as a whole. The highway marked the end of an era in Big Sur as it simultaneously influenced the ways in which the outside world would imagine and fix their own identities of the landscape and people onto the coast.

History of the Highway

The momentum for the development of a highway along the southern coast of Monterey County began long before the passage of the first appropriations bill in 1919. The vision for such a road began with Doctor John L.D. Roberts who acted as the coast's physician until 1901 and later became a member of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors.¹ Rosalind Sharpe Wall wrote that Dr. Roberts “felt that the highway would not only make life easier for the inhabitants of the region, especially for those around Lucia, but would make this scenic landscape accessible to everyone. As it was, no one knew its beauty save those who lived there. It belonged, he felt, to the state, the nation, the world.”² Later, when Elmer S. Rigdon was elected to the state senate representing the Seventeenth Senatorial District, which included Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties, the vision for a coast highway would begin to take shape.

A 1916 article in the *Monterey American* extolled the benefits that such a highway would bring to the region as “wonderful virgin forests await tapping; a beautiful scenic paradise will have been unfolded to attract tourists and divert traffic from the Southland. It will open for development a country rich in natural resources and thereby tremendously enrich these two counties.”³ Even before the construction of the highway began, the region as a whole saw the ways in which resource extraction and tourism could co-exist with each other and provide even more profit and benefit to the region. The City of Monterey embodied such a coexistence later in its life as fisheries and tourism coexisted successfully for many years, as Connie Chiang documents in *Shaping the Shoreline*. This newspaper article shows the ways in which “those who pursued both industries came to see the coastline as a commodity that could be altered and

1 Rosalind Sharpe Wall, *A Wild Coast and Lonely: Big Sur Pioneers* (San Carlos, CA: World Wide Publishing/Tetra, 1989), 85.

2 Wall, 86-87.

3 “E.S. Rigdon to Work for that New Road Down the Coast: Would be of Inestimable Value to This Peninsula,” *Monterey American* (Monterey, CA), Nov. 20, 1916.

marketed to consumers,” which is just what occurred along the Big Sur coast and was advocated for in arguing for the highway.⁴ Furthermore, the newspaper excerpt reflects the ways in which Wall refers to Roberts' passion for the project and the highway, and thus the region's, position within both the state and national identity.

After Elmer Rigdon's election to the state senate, the California government passed the first legislation directed towards funding the construction of the highway along the coast in 1919. However, it was not until 1921 that construction began with \$1.5 million earmarked for the highway. At the time, of the ninety-two miles surveyed between San Luis Obispo and Carmel, fifty-two miles were as yet unopened and undeveloped.⁵ After the initial funds were spent, it was several years before construction recommenced due to a new governor who was unsympathetic to the development of the highway. Construction resumed in the 1930s with newly acquired federal funds in addition to the employment convict labor. Much of this funding came from the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and related endeavors as part of the broader Federal Recovery Program. 1934 also marked the completion of a throughway along the coast, even though it remained somewhat ungraded and at points could only allow for the passage of one automobile. The highway finally opened to the public on June 27, 1937 with much fanfare and representatives from both Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. The relatively young Pfeiffer Redwood State Park hosted the concluding ceremonies and community cook-out following the festivities, thereby further cementing the relationship of the highway with the growing tourist economy in the region.

Construction of the Highway

4 Connie Chiang, *Shaping the Shoreline: Fisheries and Tourism in the Monterey Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 7.

5 “Beginning to Spend That \$1,500,000,” *Carmel Pine Cone* (Carmel, CA), Sept. 15, 1921.

The Carmel-San Simeon Highway follows much of the same terrain as the Old Coast Road, which was only partially funded by the county until the state passed legislation in 1919 that set aside funding for the development of a coast highway. While early on, many farmers and ranchers down the coast would work together to rebuild and extend the road at various points, they often did so without pay. On occasion the county or state would allocate funding to employ a few laborers or compensate the ranchers for their work, but at the turn of the twentieth century and earlier, the maintenance of the road became a necessity in order to safely travel north to Monterey and Carmel. Given that the first funding allocated for a state highway to replace the county road did not occur until 1919, and construction not until 1921, the 1930 census is the first record in which large groups of individuals are listed as being employed as laborers on the highway project. This is the first time, aside from department records, that we have a general idea of who was employed as a laborer on the highway construction.

Two sections are indicated in the margins of the census marking the highway labor – one is marked “Road Camp Officers” and another simply “Road Camp.” Of the later group, two types of “road camps” existed along the coast during the construction of the highway – civilian and prison. One particular road camp listed in the 1930 census contains only prisoners listed as laborers, and given their proximity to other names on the census, it appears that this listing represents the prisoners at Camp 26 located at Anderson Canyon. According to archived communications records, Camp 26, as a prison camp, took over the site of the former Camp B which acted as an unemployment relief camp. From time to time, the superintendents at the camps would send requisitions for additional prison labor as prisoners ran away, were returned, or died. These requisitions often included the phrase “NOT OVER TWO (2) COLORED

LABORERS” near the request for the total number of prisoners. Given this request, the racial composition of the camp as indicated in the census appears to somewhat represent this request as out of over fifty names listed, only ten people of color are listed and represent the racial categories “negro,” “mexican,” and “filipino.” This racialization of prisoners is further reinforced since all of the individuals listed among the officers are marked as white.

The presence and use of the prison labor on the project starkly contrasts with the civilian employment used on the same project. For one, the prisoners, as dictated by “State Laws regulating the employment of convicts on construction work,” were not to drive trucks or work on projects relating to the construction of bridges.⁶ These limitations on prison labor reflect the government's opinion and enforcement of the social position of prisoners within the public infrastructure. These restrictions also call out to the government's belief that, given the opportunity, the prisoners would attempt to either run away with the trucks, or sabotage the integrity of the bridge's structure as a means to get back at a society that condemned them.

This discourse contrasts with another discourse paralleling that of the prisoners in the form of the un- and underemployed following the Great Depression. Newspaper articles describing the government sponsored labor camps position the laborers employed there as unique, exceptional, and truly worthy of the government's assistance in an era of economic depression. One article states that “within a short time a crew of 35 men, *all of them Monterey Peninsula ex-service men*, will be employed there building a new government road through the Santa Barbara National Forest” (emphasis added).⁷ Another article writes that “Preston Bull,

6 Mr. L. H. Gibson to W.B. Albertson and Mr. B. H. Henry, memorandum, 1 January 1933. Prison Labor Project Files, California State Archives.

7 “First NIRA Camp Opens at Big Sur,” *Monterey Trader* (Monterey, CA), Nov. 17, 1933.

The protected lands along the Big Sur coast have undergone multiple namings as the protected area has been expanded and/or incorporated into other existing protected areas. The Santa Barbara National Forest is just one of the many names that has been given to the governmentally protected lands in the region.

Salinas, *former cook at the Monterey presidio*, was engaged through the national re-employment service to work at the Mill Creek camp.”⁸ Both of these articles point to these men and their employment or service with the United States military as indicators of their worth in being considered for federal employment assistance.

The combination of, and interdependence between, the roles of labor and the environment in the construction and development of the highway reflected and echoed many of the larger national and regional preoccupations and discourses of the era. The discourses surrounding the specific types of labor acceptable to use on a public works project surfaced in discussions surrounding the use of prisoners and in the way that newspapers wrote about the type of civilian employed in federal unemployment relief projects. This ideas also appear, and are reinforced by, Chapter 398 in the California Statues of 1931 that specifically prohibits the employment of aliens on public works projects. This likely stems from the circumstances surrounding the Great Depression and the effect that it had on the un- and underemployment of United States citizens and the belief that if the government were to spend money supporting its residents, its citizens should come before “aliens” and non-citizen immigrants, regardless of their legal status within the United States. These events and circumstances existed throughout the United States, and the specific cases in Big Sur and California serve as another example in which to view and understand broader national discourses.

The rhetoric surrounding the environment and landscape along and within view of the highway surfaces in a similar manner as part of a broader imagining of what the American West is supposed to be in the eyes of the nation. It further becomes significant in helping give the United States a national identity and landmarks that the nation can hold on to. The coast highway

8 “First Coast Bridge Under Construction, *Monterey Trader*, April 6, 1934.

occupied much of the region's imagination in the 1920s and 1930s as some locals along the coast lamented its encroachment while many outsiders and potential tourists raved about the potential of opening up access to the land to the south for homes, retreats, and a wilderness experience. Aside from the preoccupation evident throughout the newspapers, in *Thurso's Landing*, Robinson Jeffers opens the piece with a description of blasting for the highway. In the first lines he writes “The coast-road was being straightened and repaired/again,/A group of men labored at the steep curve/Where it falls from the north to Mill Creek.”⁹ Jeffers writes often of the relationship between humans and the environment, especially along the Big Sur coast, and these opening lines indicate that once again nature triumphed over humans as the workers have to straighten and repair the road yet again in the effort of people to subject their linearity and rationality to the natural landscape. These feelings about, and contention over, the encroachment of the highway appear again on the next page as a conversation between a man and a woman develops as she begins, “I think they'll blast again in a minute./And the man: 'I wish they'd let the poor old be. I don't like improvements.' 'Why not?' 'They bring/ in the world;/We're well without it.”¹⁰ This dialogue reflects some of the feelings present along the residents on the coast as many locals felt that the highway was an unwelcome encroachment onto their way of life and would invite “the world” into their place.

The environment and its resources were just as integral in influencing and impacting the development of the highway as were the laborers working on the project. The surrounding environment plays into the highway's development in two distinct ways – the first is through the development of the highway as a scenic route that, as such, highlights the perceived beauty of the

9 Robinson Jeffers, *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* (New York: Liveright, Inc., Publishers, 1932), 9.

10 Jeffers, 10.

region to the automobilists. The second way includes the manner in which the environment influenced the process and development of the highway, such as in the repeated and multiple landslides that occurred along the coast during the road's construction. These two facets of the environment have fundamentally shaped the way that the highway functions in relation to the Big Sur coast and its development and economy.

In *Windshield Wilderness*, David Louter explores this relationship between roads and the national parks in the Pacific Northwest and how the relationship between roads and wilderness areas changed over the twentieth century. While Highway 1 does not cross through any National Parks, nor drastically infringes upon State Park land, it is still situated in a landscape that is heralded as a “natural beauty” and “scenic wonder” in ways that are often associated with park lands in addition to containing federally designated Wilderness Area. He writes that “still, we are willing to suspend disbelief that a park road intrudes on, or is harmful to, to the environment because it appears to fit the scene so well and presents the scenery to us.”¹¹ In addition to the idea that the road “fit[s] the scene so well,” Louter further explains that “road building created more than avenues of travel; it created a relationship with nature in parks.”¹² With regards to this last point, Highway 1 has had incredible success in creating for the automobile tourist a relationship with nature, particularly with the landscape of the Big Sur coast. Scenic lookouts are scattered along the route of the highway and so dictate and influence the way in which the automobilist can experience nature and subsequently, what objects and vistas are worthy of their time while simultaneously obscuring the presence and signs of human labor.

In many ways, the design and development of the highway can ultimately be seen as an

11 Louter, 3.

12 Louter, 10.

endeavor in landscape architecture. A WPA Historical Survey written mere months after the opening ceremonies of the highway highlights the manner in which the road is seen to interact with the natural world and how the natural world has been constructed and designed around the highway. At one point the document points out that “the Monterey-San Simeon Highway is a strictly landscaped project” as it discusses the use of “mesembryanthemum (iceplant), equilaterale and edule” as plants planted for “slope protection.”¹³ This report though fails to mention that iceplant is in fact a non-native species and is indigenous to South Africa and was prolifically used throughout the state of California in preventing soil erosion along roadways. The report also documents that “attention is devoted to factors such as; avoiding destruction of valued growth and trees by location and design, and specifying clearing and grubbing provisions for presentable roadside appearance.”¹⁴ In these instances, the highway enables the consumption of the environment and landscape surrounding it, whether the visitor is consuming “natural” or “man-made” landscapes. In many ways, the intent and planning behind the landscape and scenery available to the visitor becomes seen as “wilderness” and “nature” in ways that “was a visual experience made possible or enhanced by automobiles and the roads they traveled.”¹⁵ Without the highway or automobiles, this visual wilderness experience as dictated by the landscapes designed and created for the viewer, would not be able to occur.

While the highway would come to be seen as a great facilitator and enabler of a “wilderness experience,” albeit most often one that occurs via a windshield, the highway also greatly influenced the landscape and environment in quite negative ways. In *The Natural History*

13 WPA Historical Survey of the Monterey Peninsula, Project #4080, “Carmel-San Simeon Highway,” (California History Room at Monterey Public Library, Historic Clipping File “Freeways – Highway 1 – Carmel-San Simeon Highway,” Aug. 5, 1937), 4.

14 Ibid.

15 Louter, 166.

of Big Sur; Paul Henson and Donal J. Usner discuss the relation of the highway to its surrounding environment. They pay particular attention to the role that landslides have played in the environment geologically and how this is visually and physically manifested in relation to the highway and its construction. Henson and Usner write that “landslides are common phenomena in Big Sur and have also piled into thick accumulations overlying older rocks. Highway 1 cuts through many landslide deposits.”¹⁶ In addition to cutting through older landslide deposits, the coastal region is plagued by the recurrence of landslides that can sometimes close down the highway, and during the era of its construction work would have to be paused as the soil was cleared from the path of the highway. They point this out when they say that “Highway 1 is the most disruptive of all local roads in this respect. It has had a long and costly history of landslides since its construction.”¹⁷ A 1931 report on Emergency Employment Slide Removal at Camp B, an unemployment relief camp, was filed for the State Highway Engineer and the report states that, “the work as contemplated consisted of removing all slides obstructing the traveled way, widening and superelevating curves, eliminating sharp curves, widening the roadbed, through cuts, etc., and installing, extending and enlarging drainage and other structures wherever necessary.”¹⁸ The Big Sur coast's geologically complicated terrain makes the threat and occurrence of land slides even more pressing since the coast is riddled with faults and fissures in the terrain that also contribute to the proliferation of springs and hot springs which many tourists and pleasure seekers have sought out and enjoyed. These very same geological objects that attract visitors and help to facilitate the development of a tourist economy also threaten the construction of, and passage through, the highway since “they [landslides] occur when the

16 Henson and Usner, 28.

17 Henson and Usner, 293.

18 W.B. Albertson and E.C. Chester to Mr. C.H. Purcell, memorandum “Final Report: Emergency Employment Slide Removal,” 6 November 1931. Unemployment Relief Camp Files, California State Archives.

ground is saturated with water to the point that layers of soil and rock are lubricated and can slide easily over one another. The majority of landslides occur where small springs or seeps emerge from underground.”¹⁹ Not only does the topography and geology of the region attract visitors, these very qualities can sometimes be a dangerous curse in the event of inclement weather and other natural phenomenon. The project of the construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway encompassed many of the discourses of the time in the form of racialized labor, the intersection between labor, citizenship, and belonging, and the ways in which people were supposed to view and interact with the natural world.

The Highway & Regional Development

The transformation of the Old Coast Road into a State Highway also changed the way in which the Big Sur coast would interact with the rest of the Monterey Bay Region, northern San Luis Obispo County, and the State of California as a whole. In turning an often precarious and unpaved road into a State Highway, the state proclaimed that Big Sur was worthy of interaction with the rest of the state and should therefore be opened up and made available for other people to experience its landscape. In some ways, this permitted the public to claim Big Sur as theirs – theirs to develop, describe, inhabit, and script as they desired. One of the manifestations of this new scripting came about as outsiders and upcoming neonatives saw Big Sur and the Carmel Highlands as sites to escape and relax as well as absorb themselves in their artistic endeavors. Rothman writes that “visitors of the 1920s began a recognizable modern trend: they traveled primarily to see different things but also to escape the pace of their life in the industrial world.”²⁰ In seeking to escape the industrial world, these new visitors and (part-time) inhabitants sought

¹⁹ Henson and Usner, 30.

²⁰ Rothman, 149.

something specific in the environment of Big Sur and would fight to keep a way of life they imagined to exist and preserve it from too much outside (i.e. industrial) influence.

It is this desire to preserve the rustic atmosphere that led to intense debate over the zoning of development along the coast. The debates that began in Carmel and along the coast in the 1920s continue today with the California Coastal Commission and questions of hotel and housing expansion. Zoning battles illustrate one way in which outsiders have positioned themselves in relation to Big Sur and their desires for, and ideas of, the landscape. The highway would also facilitate a new wave of tourism that was beginning to grow and develop before its completion – automobile tourism. The infrastructure created around the car and its occupants also stems from the outside's perception of the region and what it felt was important to highlight about it. Additionally, it positions the car as a way to know and understand nature, especially as the highway becomes a “scenic highway” along with the creation of State Parks along the routes that cater to the day visitors. The establishment of the highway allowed for the state and county to claim the region to the south of Carmel and Point Lobos as part of their state and regional identities. Their claim on this space, therefore, allowed them to create and sculpt the highway and the region to reflect their understandings of what *should* be along the coast.

Throughout the 1930s, debates appear in the local newspapers detailing the battles and continuing court cases regarding the position and use of zoning ordinances along the Big Sur coast. Much of the rhetoric used in these articles appears biased towards the outsider zoning advocates and often places the residents as anti-zoning. One article writes that “attorney Russell Scott presented to the [county zoning] commission a petition bearing 44 names representing owners of one-third the frontage between the Carmel River and Rat Creek, some sixty miles

below. Scott then presented a plan favored by the owners, but this was in strong contrast to the commission's idea and would give almost complete commercialization of the coast highway."²¹ The writer here positions the residents of the coast (and does not give any indication as to who these individuals are) as wanting to sacrifice the "integrity" of the coast for economic and commercial purposes. More than the fear of unfettered commercialization, the zoning advocates also have concern over the aesthetics of the built and natural environment along the highway since "the [plan] offered by the 44 owners would permit construction of nearly any building without control over location or design."²² The author's final point in the article rests on the assumption that the scenic beauty of the highway and region is where a common ground can be found since they write that "something decisive must be done and yet be something agreeable to all parties in preserving the scenic beauty of the highway."²³

The idea that "the scenic beauty of the coast Highway" must be protected runs through all the debates regarding zoning and development along the coast. These debates occur in a manner that privileges the uses and desires of the landscape and region by visitors and so has less of an interest in supporting the residents and inhabitants of the coast in their needs and endeavors. Another article writes that the commission should seek "a fair and equitable zoning ordinance that will prevent signboards and ugly architecture along a route of great natural charm."²⁴ The newspaper's depictions of the residents' desires portrays their position as "wanting very liberal regulations" and that they want "to combat what they term infringement on their rights."²⁵ In all these debates, the outside writers place the residents' lack of concern over the aesthetics and

21 "Protest Petition Presented Against Highway Zoning," *Carmel Pine Cone*, Feb. 2, 1934.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 "Highway Zoning Before Supervisors April 16th," *Carmel Pine Cone*, April 6, 1934.

25 "Highway Zoning Adopted by County Supervisors," *Carmel Pine Cone*, April 20, 1934.

"Highway Zoning Before Supervisors April 16th," *Carmel Pine Cone*, April 6, 1934.

development of their home as somewhat implicitly “backwards” in that they appear to still think that development and commercialization for the sake of development and commercialization are good things and so are not able to see the inherent qualities present in their environment that they should preserve for other ends.

Ultimately, these zoning debates come back to many of the ideas Karl Jacoby discusses regarding tensions and misunderstandings within the “working class wilderness” which arise when an outside group dictates to the current population that their practices are either illegal, immoral, or unpatriotic. John Woolfenden quotes Big Sur resident Hans Ewoldsen as saying “The prime and almost sole concern of the original settlers was how to make a living from the soil. Now, suddenly, it was how to preserve the beauty of the environment,” and often for the benefit and satisfaction of those who would be traveling the newly constructed Coast Highway.²⁶ Zoning ordinances, as a result of highway development, would become yet another way in which outsider interests would supersede the desires of the locals due to social divisions present between the two groups that emerged from struggles over land and the environment.

Throughout these debates, the proponents of the zoning ordinances are not supporting aesthetic zoning just for the sake of aesthetics. These aesthetic implications, in fact, are integral into the economic order of the region. Even more, much of this reasoning comes from individuals and organizations who do not live on the coast. One newspaper article provides the subheading that “Right of County to Protect Coast Road from Eyesores is At Stake.”²⁷ Again, the existence of the new highway has given the county the ability to establish itself as a governmental presence along the coast when it has been sparsely involved in its development in

26 Woolfenden, 114.

27 “Legal Fight on Zoning is Opened,” *Monterey Peninsula Herald* (Monterey, CA), March 25, 1937.

the past. Another newspaper article writes that “the county has the right to zone to protect natural beauty because beauty is an economic asset.”²⁸ It goes on to state that “that said scenic attractiveness is a public asset” and positions the scenic welfare and beauty of the highway as an economic and commercial boon to the county and State.²⁹ The introduction of the highway along the coast has changed the ways in which the resources and environment of the Big Sur coast are viewed, especially in relation to their economic viability and consumption. In his examination of Island County, Washington, Richard White wrote that, in the 1920s and 1930s and following the establishment of state parks, “now, for the first time, dollar value could be attached to land that grew flowers, not wheat; land that supported deer, not cows; and water yielded fish not for the market but for the visiting fisherman. These things brought vacationers, and vacationers brought money.”³⁰ White's descriptions here illustrate the ways in which Big Sur and Island County share similar experiences with the position of their lands and the contrasting ways in which locals and outsiders have approached them. Regardless of the shifting economic orientations of either place, the resources and environment of the region have remained at the center of a viable economy for the region.

As the highway and its scenic beauty become seen more and more as a regional asset, it becomes more solidly positioned within the State and nation as belonging not just to the residents of the coast, or even Monterey County, but a greater population. One of the newspapers wrote that ruling on a court case which contested the 1929 zoning laws established for the highway would have broader implications for zoning ordinances throughout the state. It states that “if it [the decision] is upheld during the expected appeal to higher courts, the decision will

28 “Full Text of Judge Dooling's Decision Upholding Zone Law,” *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, Nov. 2, 1938.

29 Ibid.

30 White, 148.

establish a precedent increasing the powers of state and county governmental units throughout California to preserve the appearance of scenic highways,” and that “its effect will involve the entire state.”³¹ Interestingly enough, the author quotes Carmel Martin, chairman of the zoning commission, as saying that the decision “will aid all government bodies interested in maintaining the beauty of scenic roads so that the *purpose* for which they were constructed will not be lost,” (emphasis added).³² Martin's statement indicates his position and belief that the purpose of scenic roads are to provide a pleasurable and “scenic” alternative to other roads. This purpose requires that these roads should constantly be protected and managed to ensure that they continue to effectively provide that experience. Dr. John L.D. Roberts, who ignited the drive for the creation of a highway along the coast, knew the difficulties of travel up and down the coast as he acted as the coast's physician for many years. But, as Woolfenden writes, “on his trips into the Big Sur country, over wagon roads and trails, Dr. Roberts became entranced with the scenic beauties around him and determined that these should be enjoyed by others.”³³ In this instance Martin echoes Roberts' desire for the road to exist as a means for visitors and outsiders to see and experience the beauty of the Big Sur coast.

The development of the highway solidified the ways in which Big Sur would come to rely on tourism as a central facet of its economy and would define the way in which many of its visitors would come to know the region. These visitors and tourists, in visiting the coast, would ultimately have their experience with the environment and landscape mediated by their automobiles. While, as White discussed, the establishment of a state highway allowed for the viewpoints of the resources of the region to shift, he also writes of the Pacific Northwest that

31 “Martin Tells Importance of Zone Decision,” *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, Nov. 10, 1938.

32 Ibid.

33 Woolfenden, 100.

“valleys deep in the Cascades, for instance, might be beautiful, but because they were inaccessible, they were not 'scenic.' The comfort of the observer was essential for scenery.”³⁴

This also becomes a central concern in the creation of the highway because, prior to its development, the experience of the coast was hardly “scenic” and also coincided with earlier beliefs about wilderness and its imposition and danger. Hal Rothman writes of the ways in which the advent of the automobile, and automobile centered tourism, changed the way that tourism was thought of in the American West in contrast to the tourism development that occurred with the railroads. He argues that the automobile “encouraged the kind of localized tourism that typified the era before widespread railroad travel. Ordinary people could visit places within the limited range of early automobiles and dirt highways,” and that “these people were seeking a new kind of tourism that differed from the heritage-dominated tourism promoted by the railroads in two important ways: it served a predominantly local and regional overnight and day-use audience, and those constituencies sought recreation and experience rather than the enlightenment and cultural message promoted in fin de siècle national parks and monuments.”³⁵

In fact, tourism and vacations in Big Sur have centered around the recreation and experience of the coast whether people seek it out for its natural beauty or its association with famous literary and artistic individuals and movements.

The development of the highway along the Big Sur coast opened up the region to become a part of the regional and national identity. John Woolfenden cites a few statements that Mrs. “Lady Bird” Johnson made in the 1960s. “In her speech at Colton Hall, Monterey, before riding down the coast,” he writes, “Mrs. Johnson had said: 'Your coastline, which is your immediate

34 White, 145.

35 Rothman, 147, 149.

pride and pleasure, is also the nation's coastline, our common western edge...I know that the people of the Monterey Peninsula know that conservation, beautification, call it what you will, is more than just one tree or one historic building or one scenic highway. It is a frame a reference, a way of life.” At Bixby Creek she had said, “this is not a place for high speed driving or thundering commerce. This road is dedicated to leisure and to people who wish to absorb the beauty of an incomparable shore.”³⁶

Johnson's statements reflect the ways in which Big Sur's, and the entire Monterey Peninsula's, position shifted within the state and nation following the construction of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway. In supporting such a governmentally intensive project, Monterey County ultimately took ownership in the coast in such a manner that demonstrated their desire to economically benefit from its scenic beauty, especially as Big Sur's environmentally³⁷-centered tourism economy had been slowly developing during the early twentieth century. The decades spent on the construction and development of the highway also shows the ways in which labor along the coast continued to be thought of in relation to the landscape as well as the complexities and discourses existent in the divisions of labor used on the construction of the highway. The highway also functioned as a medium for the decades long debate about the relationship between locals/insiders and tourists/outsideers, as there were sometimes conflicting desires over the highway as well as social divisions in the labor used on the construction. Ultimately, the Carmel-San Simeon Highway, and its designation as a scenic highway, solidified Big Sur's dependency on its natural resources in its economic development, and further demonstrates the social divisions among and between the residents, outsiders, and laborers.

36 Woolfenden, 117.

37 Here I use “environmentally” not necessarily to invoke an environmentalist mindset but rather to demonstrate the ways in which Big Sur's tourism economy centered around the usage of the environment – whether for pleasure, hunting, or any other sort of experience based on the flora, fauna, and landscape of the region.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to explore and examine the ways in which the economies along the Big Sur coast have developed and evolved from the beginnings of homesteading in the region until the grand opening of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway in 1937. During this era, the natural resources and landscapes of the region, whether the timber and mining of the region or the scenic beauty that sparked the desires to share the coast with the world through the development of a scenic coastal highway, have proven to be pivotal to the economies that Big Sur has inhabited.

The environment and landscape that inspired the beginnings of tourism in the region in the early twentieth century continue to draw in thousands of visitors down Highway 1 every year. In many ways, the neonatives that chose to relocate to Big Sur beginning in the 1920s later became the foundational families and proprietors for establishments that have contributed to much of Big Sur's fame today. The Deetjen's moved to Big Sur in the 1930s and shortly after opened up Deetjen's Inn, which stands today and is placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Nepenthe Restaurant, which for many years was regarded as a cultural nexus of bohemian life along the coast, and featured the major motion picture *The Sandpiper* did not open until the late 1940s when the Fassett's moved to the site after World War II and relocated to a cabin temporarily inhabited by Henry Miller. Henry Miller became another iconic feature of the coast, and there remains the Henry Miller Memorial Library in his honor. Miller as well did not begin his residence on the coast until the 1940s, but would be known for his novel *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* published in 1957.

For many of these individuals, the beauty of the environment would become central to

their choices to live along the coast. And in the case of Nepenthe, it is said that you pay almost as much for view as you do for the food. One of the treasures of the Deetjen's property was a well secluded albino redwood which Robinson Jeffers wrote about in a letter in 1915.¹ In *Big Sur Inn: The Deetjen Legacy*, Anita Alan dedicates an entire section in the description of the inn on the “Native Neighbors” and Deetjen's choice with regards to the site of the inn. All of these speak to the ways in which the environment and perceived beauty of the coast remained, and continues to be, central to the functioning of a successful tourist economy in the region. In *My Nepenthe: Bohemian Tales of Food, Family, and Big Sur*, Romney Steele writes of her family's multigenerational experience with the Nepenthe Restaurant. In the section titled “Early Days in Big Sur” Steele writes, “There was no electricity when my grandparents moved to Big Sur in the 1940s, and even with the opening of Highway 1 ten years earlier, the remote coastal community remained a quiet hamlet, with at most 300 full-time residents. They were a sturdy mix of ranchers, artists, bohemians, affluent retirees, business owners, descendents of pioneer families, Mexican Californians, and the region's native people.”² Here, Steele's characterization of the diversity of the population is interesting because even though she positions it against the opening of the highway and remarks how little things seem to have changed, many of these individuals were newcomers to the area not twenty years earlier and were often seen as intruders and developers with outside interests to many of the families living along the coast. Nepenthe's history begins with Steele's grandfather who initially envisioned merely a road-side hot dog stand and not a world-famous restaurant. But even then, William Fassett saw the interrelationship between road-side hospitality and tourism, via the highway, that would come to be one of the

1 Anita Alan, *Big Sur Inn: The Deetjen Legacy* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2006), 8.

2 Romney Steele, *My Nepenthe: Bohemian Tales of Food, Family, and Big Sur* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, 2009), 23.

central nodes of the region's economy in the twentieth, and into the twenty-first, century.

These books on memorable locations in Big Sur, in addition to other books and local publications, also demonstrate the different ways in which the past of Big Sur is remembered. In the free *Big Sur Guide* for the Summer 2009 – Spring 2010 season, put out by the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce, its front-page article “The Greatest Meeting of Land & Sea” details the highlights of the Big Sur coast. Very little time is dedicated to the period between when Big Sur was “that unexplored and unmapped wilderness which lays along the coast south of Monterey” and the opening of the highway in 1937.³ The *Guide* provides two highlights from this era. The first is that it points out that “the landmarks bear the names of many of those early settlers” after noting that “neither grantee settled on the land” of their land grants and that “in the following decades other hardy persons followed and staked out their homesteads.” The second is that the *Guide* points out that “at the turn of the century Big Sur sustained a larger population than it does today. A vigorous redwood lumbering industry provided livelihoods for many” and neglects to mention the variety of other industries that existed along the coast, or even that others lived along the coast who were not homesteaders. The article also highlights that “hiking, backpacking, and scenic driving are major recreational activities,” and so indicates the ways in which the region's environment is central to its development and economy. Finally, the article ends by saying that “Highway 1 through Big Sur is a designated American National Scenic Byway and California Scenic Highway, an honor reserved for highways that are so distinctive that *they are destinations unto themselves*,” (emphasis added).

The flora and fauna of Big Sur continue to be the major selling points of the region. *The Big Sur Guide* has special articles dedicated to hunting and fishing guidelines, the redwood trees,

3 “The Greatest Meeting of Land & Sea,” *Big Sur Guide*, Summer 2009 – Spring 2010.

and the Ventana Wildlife Society California Condor Recovery Program. In addition, the off-season highlights include “the opening of the fishing season for steelhead rainbow trout” in mid-November, the migration of Gray whales from the end of December through March, and the blooming wildflowers in spring time. The early hunting and fishing parties, and hot springs vacations are just a few of the precursors and early examples of the ways in which the environment and landscape of the region has ultimately defined the economic fate of the region in conjunction with well-connected individuals who fought to make this place accessible to those who could afford the visit.

In spite of, or even due to, the history of industry and agriculture in the region, from the 1930s many individuals and organizations have been supportive of placing lands in and around Big Sur and the Santa Lucia mountain range under the realm of the state and federal governments with designations as State Parks or Wilderness Area. The transformation of the region into a Wilderness Area in some ways parallels the transformations and developments that have occurred with National Parks throughout the American West, especially when it comes to concerns over the impact that such designations place on the local communities. In the Santa Lucias, the Ventana Primitive Area was established in 1931, then abolished and replaced with the Ventana Wilderness Area in 1969. Land has been added to the current holdings throughout the decades up until it has reached its current size. Recently, another controversy has arisen with a bill, AB 2074, proposed by State Assembly member Bill Monning “that would designate 920 acres in the northeast corner of Andrew Molera State Park in Big Sur as a state wilderness area.”⁴

Two points of contention have risen out of this proposal. The first is that many of the

4 Chris Counts, “Big Sur wilderness bill – will it make it harder to fight fires?” *Carmel Pine Cone* (Carmel, CA), March 5, 2010, 1A.

local residents feel that they were insufficiently consulted prior to the introduction of the bill. The second is that many of the same residents feel that the location of the proposed wilderness area would make fire prevention and suppression difficult because they fear it would limit access to a crucial firebreak inside the park. The article cites Ventana Wilderness Alliance president Tom Hopkins as explaining that “the proposed wilderness features spectacular views of the Little Sur River and Pico Blanco.”⁵ While local environmental groups aim to protect wilderness and scenic landscapes, it appears that one of the main reasons for wilderness designation of this site is so that the views of other sites remain preserved. This falls in line with Rothman's discussion of the development of tourism, especially “environmental” tourism, from a consumption-based, to an experienced-based economy. In some sense, there might not be a drive to preserve this landscape had it not already been constructed as providing views and experiences for visitors – both locals and tourists alike.

In these last few pages I have tried to illustrate the ways in which the transformation of Big Sur's economy from one centered around an extractive economy to one that relies on tourism has lasting impacts into its economy throughout the twentieth, and into the twenty-first, century. Despite the changes that have occurred over the century, the environment and landscape of the region has remained central to providing for the region in both a very tangible and a very monetary sense. In many ways, the opening of the Carmel-San Simeon Highway solidified this transformation and, quite intentionally, created a Big Sur that solely existed for visitors to experience it. The Big Sur experience would change over the decades whether it is to find the places and namesakes of Robinson Jeffers' poetry, losing oneself in the beatnik and bohemian culture of the coast, or looking to experience a rugged and “untouched” landscape in a way that

5 Ibid., 9A.

only a wilderness area could provide. The change in the economy has also created a change in the social demographic of the region while maintaining, for the most part, a racialized division of labor that exists most prominently within the hospitality and restaurant industries (as it does throughout most of the nation). Big Sur, throughout its history, has remained dependent on its environment to keep it connected with the capitalist and market-based economy of the nation. In its transformation into a tourism-based economy, insiders and outsiders, locals and tourists alike have worked both with and against each other to carry out what they each considered the best use of the region's resources.

With this framework of changing economies, I have tried to fill a gap in the telling of the history of Big Sur that so often seems to gloss over the era between the initial homesteading and the opening of Highway 1 and create a more complicated picture of what life was like, and centered around, on the coast. I also envision this project as fitting in with other histories of California and the American West that seek to reinsert the people so often lost and underrepresented in the histories of places that they helped to build in so many ways. In the end, the environment and landscape of the Big Sur coast has been instrumental in the region's development and identity and central in defining people's relationship to and with the land.

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